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EXCLUSIVE

Adem Poric: Is he the Gazza of Aussie Soccer ?



McCoist Unlikely to Leave Scotland

BY Stuart Bell

STORIES ARE sweeping Australian soccer about the likely imminent arrival of Scottish meg striker, Ally McCoist.

But the man who has become a cult figure in Glasgow after winning every honour in the game with Rangers seems unlikely to leave his native land – at least for the foreseeable future.



"I can't see it," said a friend of the striker. "Ally has only recently signed on with Kilmarnock and there was 25,000 people just to see him at the club's pre-season open day.

"The boy is huge. He has even got his own TV show."

It looked likely that McCoist would have gone to play in the J League after his contract with Rangers expired last season but he turned his back on that big money deal as well as others in England, USA and France, to stay in Scotland.

Stories linking him with Northern Spirit, it seems, are just that; stories.

"I can't see it," *Inside Soccer* was told, "after all it is hardly as if he needs the money, is it?"



HO HO HO: And it's that time of the year again with Australia's best selling soccer publication wishing you all a Merry Christmas



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MERRY XMAS TO ALL OUR READERS

Muscat legal action threat

Australian defender Kevin Muscat is reportedly under threat of legal action from two players injured following controversial tackles.

Charlton midfielder Matty Holmes needed three operations and had a metal rod inserted in his left leg after a tackle when his club met First Division Wolves in February.

His solicitors have written to Muscat threatening legal action, while Norwich's Welsh star Craig Bellamy, who needed nine stitches in his knee following a clash on Saturday, is also considering a lawsuit.

Referee John Kirby

took no action against Muscat on Saturday, but told England's The Sun newspaper he was willing to review the incident.

Holmes told the paper he had not played for the first team since his injury, which like Bellamy's was not spotted by the referee.

He said he planned to sue if he failed to return to football.

"I have three years to decide if I want to sue," he said.

"Since that tackle I have never heard from the player or the club. It has been a nightmare".

INSIDE SOCCER Australia's weekly soccer Bible

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Bingley heading back to Marconi

By Bruce Campbell

SOCEROO Matthew Bingley was a visitor at Marconi on Saturday night as his former club went down 2-0 to visiting Carlton.

Bingley's contract with J League side JEF United finishes at the end of this Japanese season but the brilliant utility player was reluctant to be drawn on his future.

"I've got a bit of an injury so officially I am holiday until my contract runs out at the end of January," Bingley told *Inside Soccer*.

"I haven't given the next step much thought, really I just want to have a bit of a break from football and then see what happens."

In Japan Bingley's blond hair made him a stand-out with the club's fans but he also revealed what a great time he had with his team-mates as well.

"It was brilliant," he said, "they really looked after me very well."

"There was no question

of me being frozen out because I was a foreigner – the exact opposite really.

"The players were very protective of me even in training and if anything ever happened they would all get upset."

"I had a great time and it was a fabulous experience."

After a short spell at home with his family and girlfriend over the festive season Bingley will be looking to continue his career with an eye to being a member of Raul Blanco's Socceroo squad.

The utility player proved when given his chance by former coaches Eddie Thomson and Terry Venables that he can compete at the highest level and he looks set for a strong run of caps – particularly if he chooses to continue his career in the Ericsson Cup.

If Blanco is finally selected as the man to guide Australia's fortunes to the next World Cup then that might just be the deciding factor which sees Bingley back in

Australia on a more permanent basis.

He watched the Carlton match from Steve Brescia's private box at Marconi Stadium but would not concede that that the hospitality of Marconi's millionaire benefactor is a clue to his likely destination.

It is, however, known that Marconi officials have held preliminary discussions with Bingley, their former star.

Bingley himself would not rule out a possible return to Fairfield.

Other clubs who could well join the frame for his signature include big-spenders Sydney Olympic, Carlton and Northern Spirit.

"I haven't spoken to Sydney Olympic at all," Bingley added although he did not rule out the born-again club as a possibility.

"We'll have to see what happens."

"I won't be going back to Japan although I could head overseas."

One factor which might stop him from going to

Fairfielders

While it is expected that he will sign for Fairfield Bulls in the NSW Super league Marconi officials are concerned at the lack of goalkeeper cover after the injury to number one Ante Covic.

Stand-in goalie David Aceski has a superb game against Carlton but Marconi could still swoop to add Hughes to their squad.

ASF to investigate Knights spree of destruction

MELBOURNE Knights players went on a rampage of destruction at Newcastle on Friday night after a last minute equaliser cost them three valuable away points against the Breakers.

Toilet facilities, showers and dressing room fixtures were all smashed in the spree of violence.

It is believed that referee Matthew Breeze, who was also the subject of verbal abuse from the players, has included the incidents in his official report.

ASF officials would not comment on the incident until a review of the damage has been conducted but there is sure to be a full-scale inquiry and the likelihood is that the Knights and their players could be facing hefty fines and censures.



Asian boycott averted

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has suspended a threat to boycott the 2002 World Cup over the continent's allocation of places.

An emergency meeting of the AFC executive committee last week decided to put the threat on hold but demanded that the international governing body, FIFA, comes up with a new proposal on Asia's representation at the finals to be co-hosted by South Korea and Japan.

Asian nations are outraged because FIFA gave just four places to the continent for the 2002 finals - but two automatically go to the co-hosts.

Some have called for an Asian boycott.

AFC general secretary Peter Velappan said: "We have a very reasonable request. All we are asking for is half a place. Now it is up to FIFA to do a deal."

But Velappan warned that if FIFA failed to deliver, the AFC would hold another meeting next year, probably April,

AFC put boycott on hold, but Blatter is warned

to vote on a boycott.

The AFC appointed a special six-man committee to fly to Zurich next February to meet FIFA president Sepp Blatter in a bid to resolve the clash.

Blatter had tried to head off the Asian threat by offering an extra place for the 2006 finals but it was not enough.

AFC vice president Manil Fernando of Sri Lanka said: "FIFA is forcing us towards the wall to take drastic decision.

"We don't want to take such a decision, all we want is a fair deal. FIFA should be fair to us."

Asia had three guaranteed representatives at France '98.

South Korea, Japan and Saudi Arabia qualified directly while Iran defeated Australia in a playoff - the so-called three-and-a-half

places formula.

The AFC is looking for a similar deal where it could have an extra spot through a playoff with another region to end the crisis.

The FIFA executive meets in March and the AFC has warned if the allocation of places is not changed it will order a special congress to vote on the boycott.

Whatever happens, the AFC general secretary emphasised that South Korea and Japan would host the finals and nothing would prevent them playing.

And it has revealed that Sepp Blatter sent a message to the Asian Football Confederation on the eve of their emergency meeting.

Blatter's message offered four qualifying places for the 2006 finals.

"I can understand your disappointment about the decision

taken by the FIFA executive committee," Blatter said.

"The decision however was taken in a purely democratic way taking the co-hosting situation and the results obtained by the Asian teams at the World Cup 98 into consideration.

The last time Asian nations boycotted the World Cup was in 1965 over the inclusion of Israel.

Subsequently all but two nations withdrew - North Korea and Australia.

What was thought to be a formality for the Aussies turned into a humiliation as the brilliant North Koreans destroyed Australia in two legs in neutral Cambodia before going on to be the surprise package of the 1966 World Cup in England.

By Frank Malley

First there was Watergate, then Squidgygate, more recently Zippergate - now soccer gives us Lancastergate.

Make no mistake.

The sleaze and intrigue surrounding the dramatic resignation of FA chief executive Graham Kelly and the refusal to walk of chairman Keith Wiseman despite a vote of no confidence could have as devastating an effect on English soccer as Bill Clinton's dalliances on the office of president.

It could cost England staging the World Cup in 2006.

It could undermine the job of England coach Glenn Hoddle as Kelly and Wiseman were his biggest supporters.

Worst of all, however, the whole sorry mess taints the image of English soccer in the eyes of the world.

Men who thirst after power and influence are often brought down by simple foolishness.

Wiseman and Kelly are alleged to have agreed to pay \$A8.8 million of FA money to the FA of Wales in return for Welsh backing for Wiseman's unsuccessful attempt to join the FIFA executive.

If that was the case then it was an act of blind stupidity.

Just how did they think it would be perceived when the rest of the FA fogeys at headquarters at Lancaster Gate in Lon-

don finally stumbled across their plan?

The FA's executive committee have probably seen it as a sweetener but there is no suggestion, of course, that this was for personal financial gain.

Indeed, Kelly and Wiseman may have acted for the best of motives in attempting to increase the FA's influence on the world stage, something which has been glaringly lacking since the retirement of Sir Bert Milliechip.

But by acting unilaterally and without the authorisation of the FA's executive committee they laid themselves open to misinterpretation as the crucial vote on who will get the 2006 World Cup nears.

At best they acted against the spirit and the constitution of the FA. At worst their pursuit of personal kudos was arrogant and distasteful.

Whatever, it is a misjudgement of quite startling proportions for 52-year-old Kelly, a divorced father-of-two who has been a shrewd and dependable football administrator for more than 30 years.

He may have a Mr Miserable tag on account of his permanently doleful expression but Kelly has always been Mr Reliable at times of greatest crisis.

His 10-year reign witnessed some of the most tragic and tricky incidents in the history of English football.

It included the traumas of Hillsborough, Cantona's infamous Kung-fu kick, the Dublin riot, match fixing

charges, the bung inquiry, Bosman and accusations surrounding former England manager Terry Venables.

Barely a week went by when Kelly, of late a fitness fanatic who ran five miles every morning in Hyde Park, was not called upon to rule on yet another soccer fiasco.

A Blackpool grammar schoolboy, Kelly worked for four years in Barclays Bank while playing for Blackpool's third team alongside a young Emlyn Hughes who went on to international honours, before going into sports administration.

His commitment to and love for the game could never be doubted. And it is difficult not to feel some sympathy for him, especially as he went with swiftness, pride and dignity intact. His departure is certain to leave a void at a critical time for the future of English soccer.

The same cannot be said of Wiseman, whose stubborn refusal to leave his post despite a resounding vote of no confidence is an arrogant and futile gesture.

It merely prolongs the turmoil, dragging the rulers of the game through the mud of a winter of discontent until the next FA full council meeting next month when he will surely be kicked into touch.

There will be no shortage of volunteers to administer the boot.

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Lancastergate

IT'S BIGGER THAN BILL

"Myself, Mark and our physio Jim Walker decided the option of having surgery was the best

one to take. We have missed Mark's presence and when he was in the side we conceded only two goals in eight matches. Not to have him around for the next eight weeks is a major blow. "Michael Oakes has done well but we have to get in another senior keeper to tide us over in the meantime."

And the news could also threaten Bosnich's plans for a multi-million pound New Year move to Italian team Roma. The Italians are planning to offer Bosnich a four-year \$A21.77 million contract and want the Aston Villa star to sign a pre-contract agreement on New Year's Day, according to a report in the English paper, the Daily Mail. The pre-contract agreement would be worth \$A2.72 million to Bosnich,

who is also being sought by Manchester United, the club where he started his European career.

Villa manager John Gregory rates Bosnich as one of the top three keepers in the world, but is resigned to losing him at the end of the season. Bosnich has not played since Premiership leader Villa's 2-1 win over Coventry on October 31 and his shoulder has kept him out for a total of 13 games.



Bruce Campbell

IT'S ONLY AN OPINION

MAYBE I am totally alone on this one; but I don't want Australia to be taken into the Asian World Cup qualification system.

Instead, I prefer the one which FIFA has dumped us into.

Of course, everyone in Australia is getting a bit carried away because first there is the little matter of New Zealand and our other Oceanic buddies.

Sure, the Solomons and Tahiti will fall like skittles if we have a full Euro based squad to pick

from but if cash constraints prevent that from happening then our path to the 2002 World Cup might be just a little dodgy.

Then there are those pesky Kiwis

Of course, the best scenario would be for the Oceania Confederation to get full entry but rest assured that will never happen.

There is as much chance of Scotland winning the World Cup.

So why do I not want Australia to be part of Asia;

1. We would have to beat only their third

best team

2. Asians are, and this is no racial slur, historically, and sometimes hysterically, wary of Australia as a pseudo-Anglo, as they see it, race

3. Climactic and geographic considerations are a minefield

On the other hand I can think of a few plus points for South American consideration;

1. We have spent a great deal of the last ten years actually developing our understanding of that continent simply because we expected FIFA to

place us there

2. Raul Blanco has a second to none understanding of football on that continent and has a vast army of contacts

3. There is a strong European influence in most South American countries making arrangements just a wee bit better

4. Australia, if Oceania champions, would only have to beat their fifth best country

I was also going to include another reason; because I fancy a trip there to report on the eventual match, but considered that to be just a bit too juvenile (but it's not a bad point, is it?).

Australian soccer has been a notable failure for the last twenty five years – how long can we continue to whinge and cry like babies every time we have to actually play a half decent country.

Argentina were there for the taking, don't forget that.

After all they actually failed to qualify through their own direct route.

And we won't say anything about the dreadful blunders which cost us a spot, and me a working holiday, in France.

So, Charlie boy, how about leaving things well alone.

The Asians don't want us with them because it would be better for OFC; they obviously think that we are perpetual easy-beats.

By having Oceania qualify through their system they think that they are assured of another place, making it five from Asia in total if you count the joint-hosts.

Remember the dirty tricks campaign of last time?

How, all of a sudden, the rules for qualifying were changed at the last moment?

Argentina were there for the taking, don't forget that.

Why wouldn't it happen again?

Is soccer the only

global sport which is free of graft and corruption, is it impossible to think that high-ranking football officials aren't continuously bribed?

Pardon me while I laugh up my sleeve.

All of a sudden we have senior Australians admitting that our successful Olympic 2000 bid may have been lubricated with a few well chosen gifts amounting to a lot of money.

Maybe some other Asian countries find that graft and corruption goes hand in hand with their daily life.

Look at the human rights issues of some of our Asian neighbours for example.

Would they really baulk at ensuring the rules and dates went their way?

Me, I'm just a cyclical bugger who would rather go to South America.

Cuba libre, por favor?

Mixed reactions

THE MIXED press reaction to the loss of Jimmy McKay was to me a mystery.

Like a lot of round ball fans I expected the traditional areas of soccer press, electronic and print, to be a bit better than they actually were.

Frankly, I didn't know what to expect from the 'dark areas', the so-called mainstream press.

Some of the coverage was excellent, some of the tributes to one of our most important figures of all time were fitting.

Maybe the whole thing highlights a total ignorance of the history of our sport – even within the game itself.

On that, I remember a time in the Cosmos office when I was asked by the marketing manager who Craig Johnston was!!!

Then there was the senior club official who didn't know the lad sitting opposite him at a luncheon played for his club (he'd played the season before as well).

Oh well.

REACTIONS

The public reaction to *Inside Soccer* Mark II has been superb. Going into print is like jumping off a cliff – with a blindfold on. I am glad to say that the market research done prior to November 5 has proven accurate. Australian soccer fans wanted a quality publication highlighting the top level of local game – and now they have one. Because of that success we are now preparing for Stage 2; the addition of Futsal, NSW Super League and Victorian Premier League to our pages. For us that means an expansion to 32 pages as *Inside Soccer*'s team seeks to go boldly into new areas.

Thanks for your support – and watch the Xmas pud!

Spirit & Glory Success

MUCH to my amazement Northern Spirit have succeeded in attracting large crowds including many ex-Brits and others who previously wouldn't be seen dead at an NSL match in Sydney which completely disproves conventional wisdom.

Perth Glory were the first NSL club to successfully tap into this most elusive market.

When Carlton SC failed to draw half decent crowds despite excellent form I, like most eastern state longtime observers of Oz soccer, dismissed the Glory phenomenon as a one-off aberration.

Is it really possible for one Italian- and one Greek-based NSL club to re-invent themselves to attract the type of broad-based support that Glory gets?

Of all the major cities Adelaide and Perth are unique in the fact that they both have a similar population mix as well as being one million plus in numbers.

The potential market for an Adelaide "Glory" style NSL club is there.

The only problem is that the existing Adelaide NSL clubs will, except for the odd occasion, never come close to filling it.

The Adelaide Sharks hard-core support is now less than 2,000 and their more illustrious rivals City, despite all their successes, have about 3,500.

The success of Spirit, and especially Glory, as crowd pullers seriously brings into question the relevance of the Sharks and City as NSL clubs in this new, unprecedented era.

I enjoyed your article on FIFA's decision to have Australia (if they should get through) play off against a South American team.

It's amusing to see so many so-called experts cry foul including players from the unsuccessful national team.

What has Soccer Australia done for soccer, or any of the NSL clubs for that matter?

NOTHING.

All they do is look after their own interest. They can't even organise proper TV coverage for the NSL games.

Youth development is for a selected few and senior clubs aren't interested in the average kid.

If Soccer Australia wants to be taken seriously by FIFA or the Australian public then they need to get off their back sides and

nessing it is the task ahead.

Will good sense triumph over soccer politics?

Time will tell

R Melor
Bondi NSW

Experts Crying Foul

FIRST my congratulations on a fine publication, it is refreshing to read and an informative paper instead of the rubbish which was available until now.

I enjoyed your article on FIFA's decision to have Australia (if they should get through) play off against a South American team.

There are a lot of kids out there who like the opportunity to develop and improve their skills.

Local clubs do not have the resources or experienced coaching staff to teach the basic skills to youngsters of 8-12 years.

At present we only have one private run soccer clinic in Sydney, the Football Academy of Excellence, which receives no support from soccer Australia or any NSL club.

The head of the department in charge of it should be sacked immediately.

act professionally and promote and support soccer.

Please continue with your excellent "It's Only An Opinion" and true reporting.

Ted Lange
Kellyville NSW

Appalling TV Coverage by Auntie

THE ABC coverage of the NSL Match of the Day is appalling.

I don't care how good or bad the SBS service was, or how many people couldn't receive it – the ABC is a disgrace.

If this is the standard of camera work that the Australian public is paying for then some serious questions must be asked.

Two cameras per

game is just not acceptable in modern day sports coverage.

B Stevenson
Rockhampton QLD

NZ NSL Entry

WHY all the hysterical opposition to the admission of a NZ club to the NSL?

Of course it will become a de-facto NZ national team which can only lift the standing and standard of NZ soccer no end.

As one critic put it, if the Socceroos can't beat NZ then they do not deserve to be at the World Cup finals.

It will take the NZ NSL club some years before (if ever) they start producing world class players like the Rufer brothers.

While New Zealand has a large body of recreational players the key factor that has always

been missing is the ethnic component which is the backbone of Australian soccer.

Perhaps those NSL clubs whose future prospects are grim are afraid that a cashed-up, well run Perth Glory-style New Zealand club will up the ante further, making their survival even less likely.

A successful NZ NSL club can only enhance our league.

It will force a reluctant media, especially TV, to give the NSL more coverage.

Sponsorship and corporate involvement will rise and the ripple effect will enhance soccer in the Pacific Islands of Oceania.

It's hard to believe that by admitting a New Zealand club to the NSL that enhances the league Australian soccer will be terribly disadvantaged.

I subscribe to the theory that the chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

In soccer terminology New Zealand is the weakest link.

R Melor

Bondi NSW

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Culina 'fuming' at stall in signing of Blagojevic

By Bruce Campbell

SYDNEY Olympic coach Branko Culina is fuming after learning that his new signing Milan Blagojevic can't take the field yet - because his former club Johore wants a \$40,000 'compensation' fee.

"That is a joke," says Culina. "Johore are saying that they helped develop him as a player. They know that they aren't entitled to a transfer fee because they didn't pay a cent for him, now they are looking at trying to get a compensation fee. This has really thrown a spanner in the works for us."

Culina was desperate to get Blagojevic in his side as a straight replacement for Adem Poric who was transferred to Northern Spirit last week. It was reported in *Inside Soccer* some weeks ago that Olympic were in the hunt for Blagojevic - but now Culina will have to play waiting game.

"We can't play him until this mess is sorted out," Culina said. "We have copped criticism in the press because we are supposedly signing too many players but with the amount (we have) out injured, and now the transfer of Poric, we are short on cover. Milan would have come in as a replacement for Adem in the midfield. How can Johore ask for a compensation fee when he went to play at a lower standard in Malaysia football?"

Olympic are desperate to get their title ambitions back on track after a topsy-turvy month which has seen them in and out of the Top 6.

"I think Milan will bring that bit of steadiness to our midfield when he gets cleared," Culina added. "His presence will also allow Chris (Kalantzis) and Jason (Culina) to go forward. I think that Adem is a better all-round player but signing Milan will be a plus for us in many ways because he is more suited to our system than Poric was."

And the obvious irony that Blagojevic is a former Olymp-



pic player doesn't go past Culina either. Blagojevic left the Sydney club in 1997 for a spell in Malaysian football.

Just last month Olympic signed another player, defender Mehmet Durakovic,

from Malaysia - swooping under the noses of South Melbourne to land their man.

And former St George and Marconi star Matthew Bingley is still reported to be in the sights of the ambitious club.

Euro Draw

Juventus was installed as 5-2 favourite to win the European Cup after it was drawn to play Olympiakos Piraeus in the quarter-finals. Manchester United, previously 3-1 favourite, was quoted at 4-1 by William Hill bookmakers after being drawn to play Inter Milan in the last eight in March.

Lazio, drawn to play Panionios Athens, was 11-8 favourite for the Cup Winners' Cup while Parma, who plays Girondins Bordeaux, was favourite at 11-4 to win the UEFA Cup.

European Cup:
5-2 Juventus, 4-1 Bayern Munich/Manchester United, 5-1 Inter Milan, 6-1 Real Madrid, 8-1 Dynamo Kiev, 20-1 Kaiserslautern, 40-1 Olympiakos Piraeus.

Cup Winners' Cup:
11-8 Lazio, 2-1 Chelsea, 9-2 Mallorca, 8-1 Lokomotiv Moscow, 25-1 Maccabi Haifa, 33-1 Panionios Athens/Valerenga/Varteks Varazdin

UEFA Cup:
11-4 Parma, 4-1 AS Roma, 6-1 Celta Vigo/Olympique Marseille, 7-1 Atletico Madrid/Bologna, 10-1 Girondins Bordeaux, 12-1 Olympique Lyon.

UEFA Cup:
Olympique Marseille (France) v Celta Vigo (Spain)
Bologna (Italy) v Olympique Lyon (France)

Girondins Bordeaux (France) v Parma (Italy)
Atletico Madrid (Spain) v AS Roma (Italy). Matches to be played over two legs on March 2 and March 16

Cup Winners' Cup:
Chelsea (England) v Valerenga (Norway)
Lokomotiv Moscow (Russia) v Maccabi Haifa (Israel)
Varteks Varazdin (Croatia) v Mallorca (Spain)

Lazio (Italy) v Panionios Athens (Greece). Matches to be played over two legs on March 4 and March 17

European Cup:
Real Madrid (Spain) v Dynamo Kiev (Ukraine)
Manchester United (England) v Inter Milan (Italy)
Juventus (Italy) v Olympiakos Piraeus (Greece)
Bayern Munich (Germany) v Kaiserslautern (Germany). Matches to be played over two legs on March 3 and March 17

AND UEFA has confirmed that the venues for the European Cup Final in Barcelona and the UEFA Cup Final in Moscow would not be changed - even if both teams taking part come from the same country. The Cup Winner's Cup final is set for Villa Park, Birmingham, on May 19.

X Blades

X Blades

X Blades



Has Schaefer unearthed a star of the future in the Croydon Kid

By Bruce Campbell

ADELAIDE Sharks boss Manfred Schaefer may have unleashed another star in the making into Australian football. New recruit Joel Porter could well be headed for bigger things although Schaefer insists that will happen only if the youngster keeps his head firmly on top of his shoulders.

"He is in our regular 14 now," says Schaefer, "and he is sure to get his chances this season."

And with the overseas conveyor belt getting hungrier every month for Australian talent local fans are desperate for a new star to cheer on. Joel Porter could be one of those players, with Schaefer asking for a time frame of a season to gauge him properly.

"It takes time," says the man who burst into big time football himself as a sixteen-year-old at Canterbury. "I had Joel training with me for six or seven weeks before I signed him because I don't think you can make judgements on a player in one trial match. It isn't fair on them. They can have one great game - or

one bad one, how can you judge them on that?"

Instead Schaefer sees Porter's career at the Sharks as one of gradual progression. The Adelaide youngster, who only turns 20 this week, is set for a season of learning at Hindmarsh.

"Porter definitely has a nose for goals," adds Schaefer. "He played for Croydon in the South Australian State League and was the stand-out player in that league."

"He also comes from a strong soccer background with his brother still playing at Croydon and his father a former top flight goalkeeper in England."

"His character is just as important to me as his footballing ability and I see a young man who loves his sport but with his head very definitely screwed on. He has played for Croydon for a few seasons now and would have broken into their first team when he was only 16."

"Players can step up from the State League or other divisions but I think that they need a season to do it."

Put Schaefer does con-

cede the difficulties of players making the jump into NSL football.

He says that before signing any player he compares them with what he has currently and, realistically, that comparison with established NSL players is one of the toughest hurdles to get over.

"But I saw something in Joel for the future," he says.

"He is in our 14 now but with injuries and suspensions then he could stake his claim for a regular spot at any time."

To date Porter has had to be content with coming off the bench late in the game after having made his debut as a substitute in the 4-1 demolition of Sydney Olympic.

He has also been on the scoresheet, getting the Sharks only goal in a 2-1 away defeat at Perth.

But under Schaefer's guidance Australian soccer fans could see much more of the Croydon Kid this season.

Watch this space.

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Applications close January 10, 1996.
ALL APPLICATIONS WILL BE TREATED IN THE STRICTEST OF CONFIDENCE

Viduka sure of a hot reception in soccer crazy Glasgow

By Ken Gaunt and Bruce Campbell

Croatia Zagreb has still not received a penny of the \$A8.21 million

Celtic agreed to pay for controversial Australian striker Mark Viduka.

And the soccer club insisted that if the money is not forthcoming then it would turn to FIFA and UEFA for guidance.

Viduka is currently resting at home in Melbourne following his walk-out from Celtic without playing a match.

He said at an earlier news conference that he was an emotional wreck after being subjected to a torrent of abuse from the Croatian club's supporters.

Croatia Zagreb spokesman Goran Bradic said: "The transfer fee was due ten days ago but we are prepared to wait another few days if necessary."

"If we do not receive the money by then we will have to turn to FIFA's and UEFA's lawyers to see what we can do."

"It would be shameful of Celtic not to pay us the transfer fee."

"We are not guilty in this matter."

"We have done nothing illegal."

"We were not aware that Mark was suffering from emotional stress when he

signed for Celtic.

"I am also told he looked quite relaxed last Wednesday and Thursday."

"It is a strange situation."

Viduka, who insists he will return to the Scottish champion, said his life had become unbearable in

Zagreb because of the supporters' behaviour.

He claimed he had been unable to shop or eat out and that he had

bad list of our fans it is almost impossible to win back their support.

"Our supporters are cruel. They don't think about people's emotions, only their own."

"For the past two years they have been taunting our president that he is a homosexual."

"They shout about your mother and your wife."

"But it's not all our supporters who act like this, maybe 5,000 out of

person who is highly paid then perhaps you have to put on a brave face."

Viduka walked out on Celtic two weeks ago on the eve of the match with Hearts at Tynecastle, where he was expected to make his debut.

He said: "I thought that once I had escaped to a new country with similar values to Australia and a new club that wel-



been abused in the street.

40,000.

"Sometimes, though, the fans are stronger than the players."

"I know Mark was not happy last season because of this."

"But if you are a public

comed me with warmth and support that I would be able to once again excel at the game I live for and love."

"But that wasn't the case."



Mark Viduka: will he be able to handle the strain of soccer in crazy Glasgow?

"Halfway through my first training session with Celtic, I realised I was still experiencing the same feelings and emotional stress I felt at Croatia Zagreb.

"This is when I realised that in this state I was not able to perform to my full potential for the Celtic club and the fans.

"So I decided to come back home - to recover, get my strength back - and then return to the only game I have ever wanted to play.

"I want to thank Celtic, my family, my managers IMG and my Celtic team-mates and fans who have supported and encouraged me to take the steps I need now to return to the game I love."

With the Premier League closing down on January 3 for three weeks, Viduka is unlikely to feature in Celtic's plans until February.

It means he will be

playing catch-up as his work permit is due to be reviewed in June.

A spokeswoman for the Department for Education and Employment said: "There is no problem at the moment.

"The criteria is for players to feature in 75 per cent of their club's matches, although sometimes there are exceptional circumstances."

Celtic has refused to comment on its refusal to pay but managing director Fergus McCann is clearly outraged at the bizarre circumstances of the deal.

A Croatian FF spokeswoman said: "There is nothing special in this matter at the moment.

"It is still on the level. We are not going to interfere for the time being.

"We have to see if there is a dispute between the clubs."

"Of course we expect Celtic to pay.

"We have seen the

contract after all and know what has been agreed."

A FIFA spokesman said: "We are aware of the situation surrounding Mark Viduka but we have not received any complaint."

But despite Viduka's pleas for understanding he is sure of a hotter than hot reception back in Glasgow.

In a city born and bred on the cut and thrust of the hard world of Scottish football Viduka is seen as a money hungry and greedy Aussie.

The fact that many of Celtic's fans support their club on pitiful wages has added fuel to that fire.

TV interviews with fans on the streets of Glasgow give an indication on the feeling of a great deal of Celtic fans but do not broach his biggest problem - the Rangers fans.

The supporters of the city's other club will be hell-bent on making life misery for Viduka.

Having driven their

own player Craig Moore out of Glasgow they will have little sympathy for another Aussie, particularly one who is seen as just another greedy soccer star.

Already talk of the real reason behind the Aussie star's flight from Glasgow are the talk of Melbourne.

"Money," one Melbourne Knights official told *Inside Soccer*.

"It would seem that he couldn't get his share of the transfer fee so wouldn't sign, there isn't much more to it than that.

"All this talk of stress is just crap, it is pure money."

And if Mark Viduka thinks he can go for leisurely strolls down Glasgow streets then he is in for a rude awakening.

In this soccer crazy city footballers are public property.

That could just be the death knell for Viduka's top level playing career.

Aloisi is a cut price Sky Blue

AUSSIE John Aloisi has completed a £650,000 move to Coventry from First Division strugglers Portsmouth.

The 22-year-old striker passed a medical at Highfield Road and has signed a four-and-a-half year contract.

Aloisi will be competing for a place up front with Darren Huckerby and Noel Whelan and admitted: "They're both very good players and it's not going to be easy for me to get into the side."

Aloisi has scored 17 goals for Pompey this season - 14 in the league and three in the Worthington Cup - and has set his sights on making an impact in the Premiership.

"I've scored quite a few goals at Portsmouth this year and I

hope can continue to get them in the Premiership," he told *Inside Soccer*'s English agency.

The 17-goal striker is rated at £2 million by Portsmouth manager Alan Ball, who was reluctant to see one of his club's best assets go north.

But Portsmouth is losing £40,000 a week and had to borrow money last month to pay its players, hence chairman Martin Gregory's cut-price sale of all the squad to ease the annual £3 million wage bill.

Since the Aloisi deal Gregory has resigned from the troubled club once co-owned by former Socceroo boss Terry Venables.

Unfortunately Aloisi's transfer deal is only likely to net Portsmouth about £300,000.

The club owes the

Australian an overdue signing-on fee and must pay his former club Cremonese the £200,000 still owing from the transfer negotiated by Terry Venables when he was Portsmouth chief, plus a third of the profit from the move to Coventry.

The bargain basement sale has angered Pompey players, fans and administration.

Aloisi joined his teammates in a protest last weekend, wearing a t-shirt that advertised his services for the sum of £5.

Ball was furious at losing his star striker.

"It's absolutely ridiculous to sell our best players so cheaply," he was quoted as saying by British newspapers.

"There is no money to replace them."

From agencies

Steve signs for Wolves

WOLLOGONG
Wolves have signed another player from NSW Super League club Parramatta Eagles this season - forward Steve Karavataki.

The striker joins last season Eagles Saso Petrovski and Ray Younis at

Brandon Park.

The move will place further doubt on the long-term future of Michael Brooks at the club.

Brooks was signed from Adelaide City in the off-season but has failed to command a regular spot in the side. Recently the

forward, who has been forced to play a number of different on-field roles with the club, has been on the bench.

And Brooks, who is the club's media officer, has also been replaced in some of his official duties.

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THE GAZZA OF AUSSIE SOCCER

"I want to show people who I am - on the football field"



BY ANDREW DAVIS

Adem Poric started his NSL career at St George before a sojourn in the UK where he developed his acumen in football.

However injury through his period at Sheffield Wednesday cut down his performances.

When he did make it to the first team he did quite well.

After loan spells at Southend and Rotherham and a transfer to Notts County Poric was allowed to return to Australia where he was being chased by several NSL clubs.

Finally he chose Sydney Olympic along with other new signings Hamilton Thorp and Jim Kourtis.

Well the party did not last at Olympic, Thorp moved back to Adelaide with the Sharks, Kourtis has ended up number two behind George Bouhoutsos and now Poric has been loaned out to Northern Spirit.

Now Olympic have new big signings such as Mehmet Durakovic and Jason Culina whilst Adem looks to do his talking on the pitch.

Sydney Olympic suspended Poric for, according to reports, problems with drinking and gambling.

One wonders if it is more to do with clashes at the training

ground, although Adem keeps a diplomatic silence on this one.

Now he has a chance to restart his career under Graham Arnold, a man desperate to get Poric's talents in his side, despite being warned of his temperament by associates of Poric's former employees.

Certain people have painted Adem Poric into being a party animal, a trouble maker, perhaps the Gazza of Aussie football.

Once his game kicks into gear there could be a few red faces around town once they realise this boy can influence a game just like Gazza.

Perhaps a less authoritarian attitude, like the Brian Robson model at Middlesbrough, could have kept things going at another club but now Amie is ready to put his arm around Adem and whilst he has made it clear he won't take any rubbish from his new charger, he is also ready to back his man 100% - something that should instil confidence in the young man and his game once more.

"Spirit is a professional club run very well and with big ambitions," he says.

"The club is looking to get into the Top 6 and I have always played for successful

teams.

"I hope to slot into the midfield although I am not sure exactly where at the moment.

"There are a few options but wherever I play I hope to be successful."

Brisbane Strikers were also after Adem's signature but in the end he opted for Spirit.

"At the end of the day I wanted to go to a professional club," he said, "they only train 4 nights a week up at Brisbane.

"That is not a criticism of them but to further my career I needed a really top class team with good facilities and maximum ambition."

Graham Arnold has been publicly vocal in his support of Adem.

"It is brilliant, he supports the players

to do the talking on that.

"People's opinions do not matter to me for they do not know me, they will have to wait and see my performances," he says.

"That is what counts, I know I have not hit full peak but I am sure a few opinions will change once they have seen me at full flight."

As for his experiences overseas, Adem remembers a period of constant niggling injuries.

"It is hard when you keep getting injured at a big club like Sheffield Wednesday," says the midfielder.

"They then go and buy three internationals which makes it hard to return to the first team.

"When you finally do

"Only then can they pass comment on me."

In the end Adem chose to return to Australia, despite reports of an enforced return.

"I chose to return," he says.

"I wanted to establish myself in the national team and then return overseas following that path.

"I have not discounted going overseas again, after all I am only 25, and Ian Wright did not start his career at the top until he was 27."

"Once I returned to Sydney I did not know much about the Aussie league."

"I went for Olympic because I had played under Frank Arok before."

"Sydney United, and Dave Mitchell more

man."

Adem had experience in the NSL prior to going to the UK including spells at Sydney City, Sydney Croatia, Apia and St George (twice).

During that time all his teams had great success.

Born in London he returned to the UK to continue his career.

The thing he has most learnt?

"You learn something every time you play football, and whoever you play for," he says.

"You can never stop learning."

As for comparing the old NSL to the current one there are many positives.

"The standard is a lot better," he continues.

"There are quite a few quality players around now, especially quality kids."

"That Newcastle game a few weeks back with Owens great goals show what can be done in this league, you will not see many better goals than that."

"Young kids in the NSL today are not afraid of playing at the top flight, people like Leo Carle and Matthew Langdan."

"That is really great to see."

"Perhaps the disappointing aspect of the NSL is the way that not all the teams are as professional as each other and there is a huge wage differentia-

tion for players.

"Whilst I do not support a salary cap I believe players should not play basically for free."

"Hopefully in the short term things like that will be sorted out, private backers may come in and build on successful models like the Spirit."

Finally, and for those who describe him in a negative light, including comments on a perceived (and that is all it is) alcohol and gambling problem.

"People say things and yet they don't know me," Adem Poric says.

"You have to know me to be able to comment on my private life."

"How do they know?"

"They are never around my place to see what I do, they never sit in my lounge room and talk to me."

"Perhaps if they got to know me they would see me in a different light."

"They should ask someone like my flatmate Ante Juric."

Overall, it seems Adem's treatment has been harsh but only time will tell.

For now Adem holds his tongue and wants to show on the field the class he does possess.

Perhaps others should give him a chance to do just that.

"I want to establish myself in the national team before returning overseas"

so much," says Poric.

"Certainly players respond positively to that."

"He knows the sort of guy I am, and was obviously happy to bring me on board and to do that he needed to believe I would put in 100% for him and the club."

As for the comments passed around town that Adem cannot play, well he leaves his feet

come back you might pick up a slight injury which sees you setback for another three or four weeks.

"Overall it was a great experience."

"Those people who say I only played a few games in the UK, well how many have they played?"

"Maybe they would like to go to the UK for six years and achieve half what I did."

especially, were after me and in fact they made the first approach.

"However they could not afford me and I thank Mitch for his frankness in those matters."

"I really respect David Mitchell for what he has done with a limited budget."

"To take that team into the top six speaks volumes about the

Sydney City's glorious Slickers

IN THE LATE 70s and early 80s Sydney City were the dominant force in Australian Club soccer. They had a consistency based on a large financial budget supplied by the Hakoah Club and backed by financial and political heavyweights such as Andrew Lederer and Frank Lowy.

They had everything. Or so it seemed.

threats of closure.

Team captain and stalwart of 14 years Murray Barnes felt the deciding moment came when Frank Lowy failed to get onto the ASF board.

If he had done so he may have had the power to persuade the Hakoah board to continue their support of the soccer club which had become incorporated.

pitality and pursuing his great love of rugby.

Smith combines his support for Randwick's galloping greens with coaching their kicking backs.

"It's easy for me as I was already used to knocking the ball over the bar," said Smith in mock self derision.

Joe Watson in agreement sticks the boot in and ex-

Bryan Cokely takes a trip down Memory Lane at the Sydney City reunion

Trophies, money, star players, star coach and large crowds – large crowds?

Well the opposition support was big but the sky blue slickers were embarrassed by their lack of a fan base.

What should have been a 10,000 crowd at E.S. Marks Field against Sydney Olympic would have attracted as little as 500 to a 1,000.

Against an interstate team only 500 fans would be a common sight.

So it came to pass that Sydney City folded one game into the 1987 season.

The previous year had seen turmoil off the field with

Lowy failed and the house came tumbling down.

The \$300,000 a year budget was gone and that was that.

A decade on, however, the flame still flickers.

Well, at least in the hearts of a band of ex-players.

The genial bunch gathered in an east Sydney pub to celebrate past glories.

Not a very formal affair just a bunch of old mates getting together for a beer and a yarn.

Their past relived alongside the glories and achievements of the present.

Terry Smith ex-centre forward and assistant coach is now enjoying a career in hos-

WBA centre-half Mark Traynor laughs and nods eagerly.

"Yes, he did too," he said.

The banter is broken up with the whirlwind entrance of goalkeeper and Manly coach Tony Pezzano.

He yells out: "Mitch and Kossie had the game in Brisbane, Rocky and Grant Lee are down in Canberra playing the Breakers youth," as if he's blasting his defence (who does Schmeichel think he is kidding with his bombast; he obviously watched Pezzano in his youth).

"Yeah, we saw the Brisbane game, not bad" said Watson.

Pezzano is not quite the



Murray Barnes stopping Marconi's Tilly Catbone in his tracks in a NSL match at E.S. Marks Field. Note the lack of a crowd.

epitome of geniality, too outspoken for that, he made an easy target for those spear throwing Olympic fans at Pratten Park in '85.

"Paul Kay and Fletch (Graham Fletcher) also send their apologies from the 'Gong" said Smith.

"Fletch! What's he doing?" yells Pezzano.

"Playing for Dapto," replies Smith.

"DAPTO?.... Who the.....?"

"Yeah but he's doing alright," winked Smithy.

Another break in the banter as ex-Socceroo captain Murray Barnes enters, quickly followed by Blacktown City coach Alex Robertson.

Then soon after, roars of "It's Lead Boots" and lots of back slapping as the mercurial and fit looking Agie Munoz strolls in.

The conversation twists and turns like a Willie Murray - Kenny Boden one two.

Jinky Joe Watson tells a story with the precision of one of those delicate deft passes then produces a punch line every bit as sharp as a Kosmina near post volley.

Old times and old names are thrown around.

The late news..... "Hicky's

back from Wolves". Speculation, "maybe he's off to Japan with Thommo!"and on it went.

So apart from the obvious why did the sky blue slickers have such a successful team.

Why do they still get together after all these years.

For Barnes it's straight forward.

"I had one team as a player, fourteen years at one club," he says.

"We had a couple of end of season overseas trips but we always got together after games and celebrated.

"I'm not sure if other clubs at that time were as social as we were certainly no one really joined us for a drink after the game.

"The Marconi and Croatia boys we hardly saw and the Olympic boys went their own way."

Did the closure of the club galvanize the players?

Barnes said: "In the short term, no.

"Everyone just split up and took the best offers around town."

"I was close to retirement and spent two years at Warragah."

"In the longer term, I sup-

pose, yes.

"Commonly a club breaking up has an effect [in bonding the players].

"Certainly I was devastated at the time.

"I heard the news on the radio and got to training to find kids rummaging through the gear."

"After 14 years I took it hard."

Watson and McPherson agreed and said that: "Murray basically gave it away after we finished, he took it badly."

The conversation turned towards the profile of the game.

How good are the present teams?

The general agreement was that with so many players overseas the talent in the clubs is diluted, but has the bonus of bloodling youngsters early.

Terry Smith was impressed with the crowd and promotion at the Northern Spirit v Brisbane game but not the football.

"I'd rather watch Randwick, they always try to play attacking football," he said.

"What did you think of the game Joe?" asked Smith.

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One of the greatest club sides Australian soccer has produced. How many players can you name?

"I couldn't get in, I took the boss along and showed my gold Socceroo card but the gatekeepers had never heard of the card or me and turned us away," said Watson.

Howls of laughter mixed with gasps of disbelief.

"It was embarrassing for my friend. I don't mind paying but it certainly left a bad taste," he added.

Australian soccer still has a problem with recognising its former heroes.

There are no problems if you move on and become a high profile coach or media

enough.

And as if to prove the point of this lack of recognition in walks Ernie Campbell.

"What a great player," says Barnes. "Ernie was wanted by some top English clubs and played for Australia.

"People like Ernie should be a more recognisable part of our games history.

"Maybe we need a book like

cricket's Wisden"

Surely someone of that stature should be familiar at least.

What is soccer Australia doing about this problem?

Again Barnes outlined his

programme to address the lack of recognition of players and coaches past and present.

"How does it work? Well, it has lots of info on how to nominate someone that should go into a hall of fame or something like that.

"But how far it has got I don't know?"

Soccer Australia could certainly follow this up to pro-

vide the Australian public with a soccer history that is tangible.

We all know Johnny Warren and Paul Wade but who else?

The overseas players are getting exposure but at the cost of undervaluing our national league players.

"It isn't really a problem for us," said Watson.

"With so many of our ex-players now coaching we still have a high profile."

Pezzano agreed and said: "It's phenomenal how so many players from one club are doing well now."

"There's Koskie, Frank and Mitch in the NSL

"Myself, Alex, Joe and Agi in the State League.

"Then Steve O'Connor at the A.I.S.

"Gerry Gomez is doing his thing with the juniors.

"And of course Thommo and

Hicky," said Pezzano.

So will the Sydney City boys meet up next year?

"Absolutely, we'll continue as long as we got enough for a quorum," said Smith.

He laughed but meant it.

Trayntor agreed and said: "The club spirit died in the short term but now it lives on."

"I only hope that players of today can enjoy what we have in fifteen years time."

On that note that we'll leave them to get on with their 'quiet' celebration of a glorious past and a promising future 'til next year.

From Thailand With the Love

By Sutin Wannabovorn

THE MANAGER of Thailand's national soccer team said on the weekend that Thailand was likely to vote for England's 2006 World Cup bid in return for the English FA's payment of the salary of the side's coach Peter Withe.

"It is likely that Thailand's football association will vote in support of England for the 2006 World Cup because we very much appreciate the Football Association's support in sending one of the best coaches around to help us," said Tawatchai Sajakun.

"The Thai team was in really deep trouble before he came and in only one month he brought us to semifinal of the Asian Games," he said.

"Thai people never get anything for free. Since the English Football Association helped us when we were in trouble, that's something we will remember."

Thailand has a vote on FIFA's executive committee which will decide where the 2006 World Cup will be held. England currently has no seat on that body.

Alec McGivern, the director of England's World Cup campaign, coincidentally in Bangkok on a promotional visit for the bid said: "Indirectly, it may benefit the bid. But what is wrong with that as long as you are funding genuine footballing projects.

"We are asking people to vote for us, what is more natural for them to say 'Is there any way you can help us?' That's the real world. In the specific case of Thailand we are partially funding Peter Withe. We are also funding a project to help street kids to play football in Bangkok. The FA has been doing things like this for many years."

English football has been rocked with scandal over the last week following the resignation of former FA CEO Graham Kelly (see separate story) and the revelation of Withe's wages being paid by the FA have sent further ripples of discontent throughout the bastion of football.



Kevin Mullen weaves past a Sydney Olympic player but who is that guy shouting the odds behind them?

person but for someone like Barnes who captained Australia to say: "I don't even have a gold Socceroo card. How do you get one...I don't know? You must have to ask."

Well, that really is not good

experience: "To be fair we were invited down to Melbourne before the Iran game.

"The 1974 Socceroos were paraded. Then David Hill and George Negus launched a new glossy brochure as part of a

Hicky," said Pezzano.

So will the Sydney City boys meet up next year?

"Absolutely, we'll continue as long as we got enough for a quorum," said Smith.

He laughed but meant it.

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Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*

Christmas is that time of the year when seasonal kindness pushes aside a lot of the old ills of the other twelve months. Bah humbug you might say, but surely it is about time that we all threw aside those old grievances for the good of our sport – and fellow man.

And while Australian soccer strives to take advantage of the great opportunities in sport in this country Adrian Alston is one personality who should figure in the festive resolutions of a lot of people.

The former deadly striker is now coach of Illawarra Premier League side Port Kembla where he has built up the most skilful team in the league, a team which plays with style, shape and, maybe most importantly, with flair.

Yet, when his name came up on a short list of possible candidates at an NSL club not too long ago one of that club's directors said that he thought that Alston, known to his fans as Noddy, had drifted out of the game.

The director has gone on to a senior position with his club while Alston remains with Port Kembla. Not that Noddy would have it any other way but it does say a lot for the game which Alston's former team-mate and now TV pundit Johnny Warren criticises because officials are more famous than our players. Johnny has a point.

Inside Soccer's big resolution, therefore is to help to raise the profile of our game – within our game. We won't be seeking new markets, we won't be treading new horizons. Instead we shall keep on striving to let you, our readers, know all about this great game in all corners of Australia, with our special emphasis on the NSL.

In turn the power brokers of Australian soccer might do well to look to look at some of the ideas in **NODDY'S XMAS WISHES**.

They might also ask why a man who has played at the highest level in four countries, was rated one of the best players ever to pull on the green and gold and who is one of the sharpest and most gifted figures in the game hasn't been involved with an NSL club since a short but cash starved stint at Wollongong City in the early '80s.

It might be thought that he is too big for the game he loves, at least in the eyes of those who make the decisions. It seems almost unbelievable that he can't get a place on an NSL bench, especially when you look at the 'credentials' of some of our current club coaches.

Bu, bah humbug, this is the Season of Goodwill.
Peace and Joy to all in Australian soccer.

And if you just give us half of our little request list then the fans of the Ericsson Cup will have a bumper year ahead of them.

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Diego Diaz – Director

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Noddy's Christmas Australian 5

1. Peace throughout the world
2. Respect for our fans and our sport
3. A Socceroo coming home
4. The introduction of a new competition for relegation from the NSL
5. The admittance of the Auckland Kings, Gippsland and Central Coast from the NSL
7. A NSL Division 2 of Australia's states
8. The re-introduction of the Ericsson Cup with teams from all over Australia
9. Recognition of our referees and coaches
10. A trip to the World Cup as a competitor

A FLASH FROM THE PAST
Alston helping kids in Africa
And the Socceroos with youth today in
handicapped young people



Christmas List for
soccer
the game
allow soccer players

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is day-to-day work with
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Soccer: It's my game

With Joe Russo

AUSTRALIAN soccer lacks vision and a national coach - yet we complain about "rough deals" from FIFA when it comes to qualification for the World Cup.

How can we expect better?

Our own act needs cleaning up first and then the rest of the world may take us seriously.

The last time Australia achieved anything of note was in the 1974 World Cup.

Over 24 years ago and still the perennial whine about FIFA doing this and that.

Let's face the facts.

We have failed to qualify for a World Cup since 1974 yet somehow expect that the rest of the world, including the hierarchy of FIFA, should say to us, here is an easy path to the finals.

Is the fifth best South American nation too good for us?

If the answer is yes then maybe we should question whether or not we deserve to be there at all in the first place.

After all, the World Cup is where the best countries in the world compete against each other.

Think about the European and South American countries and their respective paths to the World Cup.

For instance, Italy and England were in the same qualifying group for the last World

Cup.

Between them they have won four World Cups.

Poland, the 1982 semi-finalist, was also in that group.

In the end England won the group and qualified and second placed Italy faced a play-off with Russia, on a home and away basis, and eventually made it through.

Imagine if Australia faced the same path!

Our geographical position in the world gives us an easy path to the World Cup and we still complain.

A few South Pacific island nations, New Zealand (whom we could not beat recently in Brisbane) and then one other country.

Realistically, how can we expect any better?

Iran, Asia's fourth best last time and South America's fifth best this time and we cry 'FIFA scandal'.

We should count our lucky stars that we have it so easy!

A starting point in getting us to the next World Cup could be to appoint a national coach on a full-time basis.

At the moment Soccer Australia thinks it is fine to keep Raul Blanco 'on a string', unsure whether or not he will be in charge come 2001, when the qualifying games for the 2002 World Cup get serious.

Jimmy Mackay funeral brings showers of tributes

By Paul Millar

The team of '74 farewelled Soccer legend Jimmy Mackay at a service in Melbourne last Wednesday remembering him not only as the player who kicked the goal that took Australia to the World Cup finals, but also as a man you could not help liking.

There was a capacity crowd at the Springvale funeral chapel which was filled to overflowing with friends who could not believe that at 54 he was gone.

Mackay died suddenly the previous Friday in Melbourne.

Australia's only World Cup finals team formed a guard of honour as his coffin, draped in the flags of Scotland and the scarves of South Melbourne Hellas and Melbourne, was piped solemnly into the church.

His Australian team-mate and room-mate on tour Jimmy Rooney, who passed the ball that made the vital goal against South Korea, was a pall-bearer for the first funeral of a team that made Australian soccer history.

Scottish-born Mackay came to Australia in 1965, signing for Croatia, Hellas and Hakoah and played more than 50 internationals.

The Socceroos then were drawn mostly from migrants and recognised as the most close-knit side ever to represent Australia - and that was in evidence today.

They embraced like family mem-

bers and wept into the shoulders of team-mates with their coach Rale Rasic the obvious father figure.



bers and wept into the shoulders of team-mates with their coach Rale Rasic the obvious father figure.

"It was a team that was a family and it will continue to be a family, and the players of today should take notice of what makes great teams," an emotional Rasic said.

"If you do not have the sort of unity that was shown today there is no way you can make it, even with all the world beaters we

have in today's team they cannot do what we have done.

"That's because they are not so united, they don't have the same purpose, it's a team game and Jim Mackay was the special link.

"He was a special person and let's remember him for that," he said.

Skipper John Warren said when the squad was reunited this week they spoke of Jimmy Mackay the man, not the footballer, but the friend who had no enemies.

A red-eyed Jack Reilly, who was the team's goalkeeper, told the silent chapel that Mackay was somebody special who also had the common touch - and could also find a beer anywhere.

Before a qualifying game in humid Iran coach Rasic ran the players into the ground at training and Mackay and Rooney were desperate for a beer.

"Mackay said to me one day if he does not get me a beer I'm going to die ... That night in the bedroom in Iran there were beers in Rooney and Mackay's room.

"Water was not what they liked to drink," Reilly said.

He told a who's who of soccer that the players assembled today had been the finest of all time in Australia.

"You see the best group of players in this room that ever represented Australia, they were sensational, 16 teams played in the World Cup then, they were terrific, and Jimmy Mackay was the best," Reilly said.

Tiatto in hot water over head butt claim

By Paul Walker

Manchester City manager Joe Royle looks certain to hammer red-carded defender Danny Tiatto with a club fine for his part in last week's FA Cup head-butt controversy.

Manchester City's Australian full-back was sent off in extra-time after a flare-up with Darlington's Marco Gabbiadini as the troubled Maine Road club clawed their way into the third round.

The rumpus angered Darlington manager Dave Hodgson so much that he argued with a linesman and was ordered from the dug-out by referee Barry Knight.

Afterwards Hodgson accused Tiatto of "nutting" his veteran striker and then "making a meal of it" before the pair were dismissed.

Now City boss Royle has promised to discipline Tiatto.

Royle said: "I'm not pleased with what went on."

"He might have been fouled first, but you can't do what he did on a pitch."

"Marco might have

"Whether or not hit him first, I don't

Danny made contact with the player, I'm not sure.

"But Danny did put his head towards him - whether or not he made contact remains to be seen.

"But it's stupid doing something like that."

"I won't condone that, and it will be dealt with internally."

"I'm not happy, and we won't be happy as a club about it."

"It's silly and it's the second time this season he's done something like that, retaliated and been sent off."

Tiatto was sent off for retaliation in October in the 1-0 home defeat by Reading.

The player has also been the centre of controversy in his brief Socceroo career also, with a red card a reminder of his lack of discipline.

Royle said: "Like before, he should have just stepped away from the incident."

"He might have been fouled first, but you can't do what he did on a pitch."

"Marco might have

"Whether or not hit him first, I don't



know.

"But certainly Danny has put his head down towards the lad."

"It was clear from where I stood, and I have a lot of sympathy with their manager and the lad for being sent off."

"It was a silly situation, and we are not sympathetic to that kind of action."

Hodgson had to be hauled away from the pitch as he erupted in fury at the incident and later said: "I did what I was told."

"I went to sit in the seats in the front of the stand, and they were very nice."

"I got a good view of the rest of the game from there."

"But I have got a right to get upset when a player nuts one of my men, goes down and makes a meal of it, and then my player gets sent off."

"Marco was supposed to have butted Tiatto when in my opinion it was the other way round."

The uproar cast a cloud over City's 1-0 extra-time victory, and the fine solo goal by Michael Brown that ensured a daunting trip to Wimbledon in the third round on January 2.

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World Cup 2002; we'll be there says Cool Kid

By Ted Simmons

Socceroo and Leeds striker Harry Kewell has supported a proposal that Australia should link with the Asian Confederation for future World Cup campaigns.

Kewell, speaking from Leeds, also confidently predicted that Australia would take part in the finals of the 2002 World Cup in Korea and Japan.

The young striker played an important role in Australia reaching the final of the last Confederation Cup in Saudi Arabia and the play-off against Iran for a place in the World Cup finals in France.

"If we move into the Asian Confederation it would be better for Australia because we'd be meeting stronger teams than in Oceania," he said.

"I can't believe it's been a year since our elimination from the last World Cup by Iran at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

"I can remember every bit of that game but we won't make the same mistake and we'll qualify for the next World Cup."

Kewell was not even particularly worried about Australia, if it wins Oceania, having to qualify by beating the fifth placed South American team.

He said Australia should perform well against the South Americans but recommended warm-up games should be played in both Europe and South America.

"The World Cup has qualifiers from both areas and our games should be split between them," he said.

Kewell was disappointed at Australia losing to New Zealand in the Oceania qualifying final for next year's Confederation Cup.

"If we enter any tournament we should set out to win."

"I wasn't told about the Cup matches in Brisbane," he said.

Kewell was the centre of a storm when



Leeds manager George Graham criticised his selection by Australia for international matches but the young striker feels the situation has eased with a change of management.

He said he had not had any talks with acting Australian coach

Raul Blanco but will speak with him when the time comes about playing with the national team.

"I used to talk with Leeds officials about playing for Australia but with the change of management I'll wait for the right occasion to talk again," Kewell

said. "Everyone has a burning desire to lead their country, especially at the Olympic Games and I'm the same. I don't think I've earned my place in the Olyroos for Sydney despite playing for Leeds."

"No-one can be guaranteed a place and eve-

ryone should fight for their position."

Kewell said he had already scored five goals this season for Leeds in the English Premier League compared with eight for all of last season.

But he was a little wary about next month's third round FA Cup clash against non-league club Rushden and Diamonds.

"I'd rather be playing against a Premier League team."

"Smaller clubs come out with all guns blazing and have nothing to lose."

"We hope to get an early goal and then put some more in," he said.

Kewell, who gave his support to the formation of Sydney National League club Northern Spirit, said he was delighted with the club's progress and hoped they could bring some overseas players and get even bigger support.

Franz throws in his weight

Germany added weight to its bid to stage the 2006 World Cup finals today by naming Franz Beckenbauer as head of its application.

Beckenbauer, World Cup-winning captain in 1974 and triumphant coach in 1990, took over from German Football Association (DFB) president Egidius Braun.

"Franz in his time as player and coach has won a great reputation internationally and so he is the right man at the top," Braun said.

Beckenbauer said: "I will devote all my energy to pulling it off for Germany against some very strong competition."

Germany officially declared its bid for the 2006 finals last month.

Also bidding are England, Brazil, Morocco and Ghana, with South Africa expected to join them.

Talking Soccer with Carlton S.C.'s SEAN DOUGLAS

Roly's World XI: The line-up

What a team! A World XI capable of pounding all in its path.

The line-up of a Churchill (right back and Captain), Goliath (centre back), Ghenghis Khan (centre back), Hitler (left back), Napoleon Bonaparte (centre midfield), Aristotle (left half), Attila The Hun (right half) and finally, Vladimir Lenin (left wing), JFK (Striker), Saddam Hussein (Striker).

All we need now is a keeper and a couple of subs!

Goalkeeper: Jesus Christ (JC). No football team can win without a good goalkeeper and in history one custodian stands out above all others.

When Jerusalem won the Holy Grail, symbol of Middle East soccer supremacy, "Jesus saves" was always the catch-phrase.

It was nothing short of a miracle the way he kept a clean sheet game after game.

As a bonus JC has another talent - as a physiotherapist.

His healing powers are legendary.

Just think: No more dodgy knees in the team.

You say the midfielder has done a cruciate ligament and can't walk?

JC simply lays his hands on and without so much as wincing with pain, the lad is up and running, ready to tear through walls again.

Incidentally, the other great thing about having JC in the team is he does a terrific little number as an after match caterer.

One time at a Jerusalem - Bethlehem local derby there were 40,000 people and somehow with only a

couple of loaves of bread and a fish, he fed the whole lot.

Sub: Buddha. Every team needs a guy who, though not very mobile, is big and strong.

Buddha has more than physique, he has the moral strength and character.

He's on the bench because he's a bit of a pacifist, a bit quiet and perhaps not aggressive enough.

But then you can't have a whole team of Churchills and Husseins.

Every team needs the strong silent type in the background.

Sub: Elvis Presley. The ideal substitute - once he has finished his morning shift at the supermarket.

Elvis has enormous versatility.

The hip wiggling, pelvis thrusting version can play up front.

The artery-inflated,



Carlton's Sean Douglas: He's got the Lord on his side - and the King, how could his World XI lose a game?

pill-popping junk-food fat-boy can come on at fullback.

Looks good in his blue suede boots.

So that's my World XI. There's bound to

be some critic saying "I would have put so and so here", and "Why's he in the team?", but when it comes down to it - it's a load of old cobblers!



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Iranians take Asian Games final

By Michael Battye

Iran, even with a player sent off late in the game, won the Asian Games soccer gold on Saturday, beating Kuwait 2-0 in a game played under extra security because off U.S.-led bombing raids on Iraq.

The outcome of the all-Middle East final, played on the first day of the holy Moslem fasting month of Ramadan, was never in doubt as Iran, with most of their World Cup squad on display, took control from the start. China won the bronze when they beat Thailand 3-0 in a match 1,000 kms from Bangkok.

Kuwait's Czech coach Milan Macala fumed about the refereeing saying tough Iranian tackling resulted in a broken leg for one of his players in the incident that led to an Iranian being shown the red card.

The Iranians scored in only the seventh minute when left wing-back Ali Karimi, a rising 21-year-old star who was playing in the

Tight security surrounds match as 10 man Iran outclass Kuwait in Bangkok

Iranian third division only a few months ago, popped up unmarked at the right hand far post.

He nodded home a corner which Kuwaiti goalkeeper Khalid Al-Fahdli should have kept out.

Missing key goal scorer Jassem Al-Huwaidi with a thigh injury, Kuwait could not break the iron grip of the hard-working Iranian midfield quickly enough to trouble a defence missing kingpin Mohammed Khakpour.

Iran extended their lead in the 27th minute as Karim Bagheri of German second division side Arminia Bielefeld won yet another ball in midfield, charged through a static Kuwaiti defence and rounded Al-Fahdli before firing home from a narrow angle.

Four minutes later, it should have been all

over as Bayern Munich striker Ali Daei, who scored eight goals in the tournament, put Ali Mousavi through, but poor ball control on a bumpy pitch gave Al-Fahdli enough time to block the eventual shot.

Karimi also went close in the 34th minute as Al-Fahdli again dithered over whether to come for a corner, but the Iranian defender's header was cleared off the line.

The Iranians eased off in the second half, but Kuwait still could

not threaten Iranian goalkeeper Behzad Gholampour, who has looked the most fallible player in the new gold medallists lineup throughout the tournament.

Kuwait's 19-year-old Farj Laheeb, the tournament's top scorer, rarely got a touch of the ball and never a

chance to add to his nine-goal tally.

Not even the sending off of Iran's Mehdi Madhavikia, a striker playing at wingback who has interested several European clubs, helped the Kuwaiti cause.

Madhavikia was sent off in the 78th minute after he raised his leg high in the air to make a running interception and felled Kuwait's Ahmad Al-Mutairi, who was carried off and did not return. Coach Macala said Al-

Mutairi had been taken to hospital with a broken leg and criticised poor refereeing by Thailand's Pirom Unprasert.

"We must have better referees at tournaments like this. I saw many hard fouls which went unpunished," he said.

"Iran has a strong team, physically strong, and the referee helped them," he said.

Macala blamed the absence of Al-Huwaidi for the lack of bite up front and the lack of

incisive midfielder Hani Al-Saqr for the lack of penetration.

"That last cross, that last pass, was missing," he said.

"In the whole of the match we made very few chances. But congratulations to Iran. We played as well as we could and I'm very proud the Kuwait team won the silver medal."

In reality, Kuwait played only as well as the vastly experienced Iranians allowed them.

"We were more focused," said Iranian coach Mansour Pourheidari.

"We had a plan and we didn't think about anything except the gold medal."

Even after Madhavikia was sent off, the

Kuwaitis managed to get into the Iranian penalty area only a few times and still could not find a move that would threaten Gholampour.

The Iranians, who never looked vulnerable after a stunning 4-2 defeat at the hands of tiny Oman in a second round group match, reclaimed a gold medal they last won in 1990 at the Beijing Games when they were just emerging from a decade of war against Iraq. Then, they were underdogs. On Saturday, they were red-hot favourites and never looked like anything else as their well-organised and skilful side bottled up the Kuwaitis.

INSIDE SOCCER WILL BE OUT AS USUAL NEXT TUESDAY

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- ♦ The Godfather Part 2
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- ♦ And all the best of the Ericsson Cup

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AUSSIE STARS Lucas Neill QUEENS PARK RANGERS

BY ANDREW DAVIS

WHILST everyone talks of West Ham being the Aussie team there is another London club that over the last five years have had numbers of Aussies playing in their ranks.

Inside Soccer met Tim Cahill, one of them, a few weeks back.

Now we catch up with the other half of the Aussie duo currently at the Den, Lucas Neill.

Lucas Neill was born in Sydney on March 9 1978.

He went straight from the NSW youth academy into the youth structure at Millwall.

He was a confident young player and moved to the UK at a young age.

At that time one person helped him out in the Millwall ranks.

"Jason Van Blerk was at the club at the time and I spent a season with him here,"

remembers Lucas Neill.

"He was a good mate and helped me settle in really well, especially my first few weeks at the club."

Lucas knocked up a few fine performances after debuting for the first team and soon became a solid favourite with the fans.

That is not very easy with the Millwall fans, and especially not for a young Aussie lad.

However for Lucas being portrayed as one of the good guys in a club infamous for its bad boys is a big asset.

"It is nice to know you are liked on the terraces, it gives you a buzz to know that every time you get the ball they anticipate you are going to do something good and that is a huge bonus," he admits.

"It certainly builds confidence in your play very easily."

Just when things were going well, and he even attracted press from back home in Australia, injury cut him down.

"Before I had my two broken feet I had only had bumps and bruises."

"Obviously breaking both my feet was a major setback, and

another set back was a groin injury a while back.

"Nowadays I hate talking about injuries, in fact!"

However, like his compatriot Tim Cahill, Neill is a fighter and fought back to be stronger than ever, and in fact an Australian representative!

Whilst he was out though he had a lot of games he had to watch from the sidelines.

A lot of first team players hate watching from the stands but Lucas's response shows a really positive attitude and that he may well have the stuff to make himself successful at the top grade.

"When I am watching a game I always visualise myself playing in that match," he says.

"Sometimes I learn a lot from the game, other times I think 'hey I could have done a lot better than that!'"

As for playing for his country?

"Representing Oz is the best thing I could ever do and the more times I do it, the more I want to do it."

"The USA match was great for me personally because it gave me a boost in confidence to know that coming back from a huge injury setback I

important member of the 2000 Olympic side.

Australians will be able to see him play in competitive matches on these shores once more, something to look forward to.

His overseas experience will be invaluable to the whole camp.

Back to club level and Lucas plays in midfield for the Lions.

"I just enjoy playing football in the first team which is why I am playing either on the left or the right of midfield at the moment," he says.

"I don't see them as my ideal position, for me that would be in the thick of it, controlling play a lot more in the centre of midfield."

"Since we made a drop down a division the crowds have become quite frustrated at our form."

"We average about 7000 but when the

London teams come to play we can get up to 15,000."

Actually, it's been quite a while since Millwall saw real success and it has been ten years since the likes of Teddy Sheringham were scoring for the side in the top flight.

The new second



middle of the table.

Their side is very young and certainly has potential, however as many players in the UK do Lucas Neill also aspires to the heights of the Premier League, perhaps in a far shorter time than his club, Millwall.

"The sooner the better for me," he says of the question of making a move to a big club.

"I want to achieve at the highest level and play in the Premier League."

"My head is down and I have this dream as my main goal at the moment."

Had injury not reared its ugly head again then Neill could well be playing in the Premier League by now, or the first division at the very least.

There were rumours around of a deal to Queens Park Rangers coming off before injury struck.

His dreams are within his grasp, however, and he has advice for those just beginning to dream of a road paved with gold overseas.

"Only come to Europe if you can handle living away from Australia," he says.

"When you do get here try your very hardest and treat every opportunity as your one, only and best chance to make it."

"It may well be your only chance!"

"Finally have the belief that you are good enough."

With that tucked under his belt Lucas Neill is living a dream many of us keep as just that.

It is good advice for the next generation of youngsters to heed.

Lucas Neill is going to be a big part of Aussie soccer, both here and abroad.

African dream World Cup moves closer

THE SOCCER authorities of South Africa and Egypt signed a cooperation agreement last week and pledged to do what was necessary to bring the 2006 World Cup to Africa.

The agreement, signed by the heads of the South African Football Association and Egyptian Football Association, stated that the 2006 World Cup should be hosted on the African continent.

Both countries, amongst Africa's most powerful soccer nations, have announced their intention to bid to host the World

Cup finals but have not officially applied.

Other African bidders are Morocco and Ghana, who have formally applied for what could become the first World Cup finals on African soil.

The agreement also outlined the associations' intention to cooperate in administration, coaching and refereeing development and for the benefit of soccer in general.

England, Brazil and Germany are also bidding for the 2006 World Cup.

Bound for Sydney

Uganda and Tanzania secured places in the Sydney Olympic soccer tournament after winning qualifying matches last week.

In the Tanzanian capital of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania beat Kenya 2-0 in the second leg to qualify 2-1 on aggregate.

The tournament is split into four group and opens with games in Groups A and C on 13 September at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and Bruce Stadium.

Australia will play the opening match of Group A at the MCG.

The semi finals are set for 26 September at the MCG and the new Olympic Stadium at Homebush with the final, also to be staged at Homebush, being played on 30 September.

Australia's best ever performance is fourth place at the Barcelona Olympic sin 1992.

Harry is cool with the bucks as well

EX-PAT SOCCER star Harry Kewell is Australia's leading earning exponent of the round-ball game according to a list published last week.

Top golfer Greg Norman earned \$37.3m this year more than the next eight people on the list combined.

Norman dominated the list of 50 compiled by BRW magazine for the second-successive year while world 500cc motorcycle champion Mick Doohan was second with \$8m.

Golf also had more people on the list than other sport with 11.

Steve Elkington was seventh on \$2.5m, while Karrie Webb was next on \$2.25m and Stuart Appleby (\$2.15m) and David Graham (\$2.01m) rounded out the top 10.

Graham's standing and Graham Marsh's position at 12th on \$1.55m illustrated the strength of the US Sen-

tors Tour, where they are among the top players.

The 50 people grossed \$118.2m, up from last year's total of \$102.3m.

Only three women made the list, with swimmer Susie O'Neill equal 21st (\$1.2m) and track sprinter Cathy Freeman equal 37th (\$850,000).

The rankings were based on gross earnings including prizemoney, endorsements, sponsorships, appearance fees and other income from sports-related activities.

There were 12 newcomers to the list and four of them were from soccer, demonstrating the opportunities available for Australia's elite players in Europe.

Soccer's Harry Kewell was the highest-ranked newcomer at 13th on \$1.45m.

In all, soccer and rugby league provided six representatives each.

Ange backs Spirit

South Melbourne coach Ange Postecoglou believes that Northen Spirit will improve.

"They're not a bad team at all, they've had a horrendous run with injuries, but they have some quality players and they will improve in the second half of the season," he said.

This season has seen mixed success for the Ericsson Cup new guys on the playing pitch and Graham Arnold's men will be looking for a good holiday period run to get themselves into contention for a Top 6 finish.

Spirit coach Graham Arnold said his depleted side had run itself ragged against Canberra in the Monday night fixture before making the trip to Bob Jane Stadium on Sunday.

"I was rapt the way the guys got stuck in against Canberra and put their bodies on the line," Arnold said.

"What we have to do now is sustain that intensity."

Robbie Slater and Robert Enes are back in the squad after suspension and Arnold also has new guy Adem Poric available.

Olympic come-back against 9 man Glory

By Ted Simmons

A POTENTIAL Perth victory was turned on its head late in Sunday night's NSL match at Belmore Sportsground when Bobby Despotovski conceded a penalty and was sent off, leading to a revitalised Sydney Olympic swamping the Glory 3-1.

Perth went ahead just after the half hour but three late goals handed Olympic the three points against the league leader which also had Gareth Naven sent off in the closing stages.

Quiet defender Ante Juric was a villain and a hero for Olympic.

Juric's poor clearance led to Perth's goal but he made up for his mistake two minutes from time when he

gave Olympic a 2-1 lead.

"I'm glad I scored, it made up for my first half error," Juric said.

Perth coach Bernd Stange said that his team had panicked in the closing stages after playing well for the first hour.

"We are to blame because we played like kids. It is terrible defence to have conceded eight goals in the last three games," he said.

Perth had controlled most of the match, allowing Olympic to do more of the attacking but it lost Despotovski in the 78th minute and Naven 14 minutes later

to second yellow card offences.

The two dismissals opened gaps for a revived Olympic with Juric scoring just before time and Elias Augerinos adding the third in injury time.

Striker John Markovski celebrated his century of goals in the league when his first half strike gave Glory a 1-0 advantage at halftime.

Markovski, who has played with a number of NSL clubs swooped onto a defensive blunder by Juric to rifle the ball into the net from close range.

The goal followed a

clearance attempt by Juric which bounced off Despotovski and to the unmarked Markovski.

Perth had played a patient game allowing Olympic to push forward but conceded few chances within scoring range.

Striker Jason Culina had the opportunities to put Olympic in front but it wasn't his scoring day.

Olympic should have taken the lead in the 20th minute when Brett Emerton was set free inside the penalty area and his rasping drive could only be parried back by keeper

Danny Milosevic.

The ball fell to Pablo Cardozo with the keeper still on the ground but the shot flew wildly over the bar.

Olympic continued to press forward and a full pronged attack again found Culina in front but his shot was blocked to substitute to Carlos Gonzalez.

His close range effort was handled by Despotovski resulting in the dismissal of the Perth attacker and conversion of the penalty by Cardozo.

With the scores locked Mark Brennan found space on the left to send a high cross to the running Juric who chested the ball down and calmly placed his shot into the back of the net.



SYDNEY OLYMPIC 3 (Cardozo, Juric 88, Augerinos 90)
PERTH GLORY 1 (Markovski)

Venue: Belmore Sportsground
Man of the Match: Danny Milosevic PERTH

ERICSSON CUP SOCCER



Ericsson Cup Round 12: 27 December

Sunday 20 December

Melbourne Knights v Marconi Fairfield
Carlton v Sydney Olympic
Wollongong Wolves v Newcastle Breakers
Adelaide City v Adelaide Sharks
Northern Spirit v Gippsland Falcons
Brisbane Strikers v South Melbourne
Sydney United v Canberra Cosmos

Knights Stadium	6.00pm
Optus Oval	6.00pm
Brandon Park	6.30pm
Hindmarsh Stadium	7.00pm
North Sydney Oval	5.00pm
Suncorp Stadium	7.00pm
Edensor Park	5.00pm

BYE: Perth Glory

SOCER AUSTRALIA SCORES UPDATE SERVICE

1900 123 035

NOTE: all information believed correct at time of going to press. Please check with daily press, your club or Soccer Australia for changes to scheduled kick offs.

ASF (02) 9380 6099, Adelaide City (08) 8336 9077, Adelaide Sharks (08) 8351 9866, Brisbane Strikers (07) 3252 5327, Carlton (03) 9389 6213, Canberra Cosmos (02) 6281 7981, Gippsland Falcons (03) 5134 5529, Marconi Fairfield (02) 9823 2222, Melbourne Knights (03) 9699 4188, Newcastle Breakers (02) 4951 2722, Northern Spirit (02) 9460 2187, Perth Glory (08) 9383 9911, South Melbourne (03) 9645 9797, Sydney Olympic (02) 9558 5355, Sydney United (02) 9823 6418, Wollongong City (02) 4226 3988



Bush Bullet's brilliance

Born-again Gippsland Falcons beat Adelaide City 1-0 at Falcons Park on Saturday in their national soccer league match through a 59th minute goal by Brian MacNicol who put the final touch to a piece of magic by striker Archie Thompson.

The victory was a palliative for the 6-1 thrashing the Falcons suffered at the hands of Wollongong the week before.

The South Australians never were really in the game, apart from

a spell late in the second half.

Young Olyroo Thompson, known as the Bullet of the Bush, beat three opponents in the penalty area to pass to Robbie Puca who passed back to the Falcons striker.

Thompson showed his talent by again beating three opponents before getting a cross to attacking midfielder MacNicol in front of goal, who put the ball neatly in the net.

The goal marked is the second in six

weeks for the Falcons, which only managed to score from the penalty spot last week.

Adelaide City's tactic seemed to be to play a patient game of ball possession and swift counter-attacks.

But it didn't work as the Falcons stood firm in the defence forming a virtually impenetrable barrier.

Adelaide City coach Zoran Matic said after the game his team didn't seem to want the points as much as their opponents.

"Their (Falcons) effort was excellent. We only had a limited number of opportunities," Matic said.

He also felt that his team had been hard-

done by in an incident in the first half.

"It was a clear penalty for us," Matic said.

"There was a handball, the linesman raised his flag and then lowered it again."

The Falcons coach Stuart Munro said the victory was deserved.

"I told them (Falcons players) to go out there and get behind the ball and not do silly things but be winners and enjoy the game, which they did," Munro said.

The effort was in complete contrast to the previous week when a pathetic Falcons were slaughtered by Wollongong City at Brandon Park.



Brian MacNicol: the midfielder finished off Archie Thompson's great play

Fists and goals fly

Undisciplined defending cost Melbourne Knights dearly in their national soccer league clash with Newcastle Breakers at Austral Park on Friday night.

Leading 2-0 after just half an hour, the Knights conceded two penalties to allow the Breakers to draw the match 2-2.

Referee Matthew Breeze handed out eight yellow cards as well as one red card to Knights defender Dragi Nastevski in the last minute in a fiery match.

The Knights took the lead in the eighth minute when a ball, played into the Breakers' penalty area, was controlled by Karl Hrvoje who laid it off for Ivan Kelic to fire home low past Breakers goalkeeper Bobby Catlin.

Three times Catlin

needed to go full stretch to fingertip shots and crosses away from a marauding Knights attack.

The Knights doubled their lead in the 33rd minute when Kelic returned the compliment for his strike partner Hrvoje to belt the ball home from 10 metres.

The game erupted right on halftime when the Breakers were awarded a penalty after striker Sang-Chul Yoon was felled in the Knights' penalty area.

The Knights defenders protested vehemently, accusing Yoon of taking a dive and an all-in brawl ensued.

Astonishingly referee Breeze only flashed three yellow cards.

When order was restored, Breakers skipper Shane Pryce stepped up to reduce the deficit from



Bobby Catlin: in the thick of the action in a spiteful match at Austral Park

the spot.

The teams cancelled out each other in the second half as play swung from end to end but four minutes from the end, Knights defender Ice Kutlesovski felled Breakers striker

John Buonavoglia just inside the penalty area for the Breakers' second spot kick.

Once again, Pryce stroked home the penalty to bring the Breakers level.

Northern Spirit midfielder Paul Bilokapic celebrated his 100th game in the national soccer league in winning style against the Canberra Cosmos at Bruce Stadium last Monday.

Bilokapic was on hand to slot away a 52nd minute penalty to give the Spirit a much-needed 1-0 victory after the teams had battled through a scoreless first half.

The loss also gave Canberra an unwelcome record - the 13th loss on the run for Canberra and the longest blank streak in the 21-year history of the NSL.

The goal came when Paul Roberts, in his debut game, handled just inside the area and Bilokapic rammed his shot home from the penalty spot.

The Cosmos best chance had come in the first half, but teenager Anthony Magnacca took too long about his shot and Spirit player-coach Graham Arnold scrambled the ball away.

Because of injuries and the suspension of key players Robbie Slater and Robert Enes, Arnold had been forced to promote youth players into his lineup, including 18-year-

CANBERRA COSMOS 0
NORTHERN SPIRIT 1 (Bilokapic pen 52)

Venue: Bruce Stadium
Man of the Match: Paul Bilokapic SPRT

old rookie Adam Snyder in his initial appearance.

The depleted Northern Spirit held on for a 1-0 win yet Spirit coach Graham Arnold had words of encouragement for his opponent afterwards.

"I believe Canberra should be part of this competition and on this showing it will improve in the second half of the season and in next season," he said.

"The club has a lot of good young players, it is just short of a couple of older heads up front and in midfield."

He said he was delighted with result.

"There is a tall poppy syndrome which likes to see us slip up, and our fighting spirit is not what it should have been in recent games, but tonight everyone gave 100 per cent," he said.

Cosmos captain Ivan Zelic said the Cosmos was up against it when first Norman Kelly and

then Peter Buljan were forced from the field in the first 25 minutes.

Kelly was limping, and Buljan was suffering from heat stroke after spending too long in the sun over the weekend.

The Cosmos penetrated early - a long ball from Leo Langone picked out Buljan.

The striker's shot went in at an angle, goalkeeper Paul Henderson did not gather cleanly, but was allowed time to recover.

At the other end, out of form striker Clayton Zane had two chances to break a long scoring drought - his first attempt was saved by Vilson Knezevic at the cost of a corner; his second, a glancing header from a cross by Kresimir Marusic was wide of the mark.

The home side almost took the lead when youngster Anthony Magnacca found himself through but took too long with his shot and Arnold hacked the ball clear.

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 2 (Yoon 5, Pryce 81)
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 2 (Kelic 8, Krvotje 33)
Venue: Breakers Stadium
Man of the Match: John Buonavoglia NEWC

Christmas bells ring at Bob Jane



By Alan Clark

OTHER than for the opening salvos, South Melbourne were rarely stretched in their 2-0 win against Northern Spirit at Bob Jane Stadium on Sunday.

Injuries had depleted the Sydney side to the extent that player-coach and striker Graham Arnold started himself as sweeper rather than in off the bench into the forward line.

"It's been quite difficult getting cohesion. (Robbie) Slater fell out yesterday with a strained hamstring," said Arnold.

"Ian Crook's due back any time now, and then once he's back, I'll be back to the bench."

"It's just too hard playing up front and coaching because you've got your back to the play most of the time and it's hard to communicate from up front."

Michael Curcija scored both goals - the first after 31 minutes when Clarkson had floated in a free-kick from the left.

Spirit goalkeeper Paul Henderson left his line to claim it, but was unable to reach it cleanly as defender Mark Rusan and South striker Vaughan Coveny rose for the header in front of him.

The ball fell to Curcija whose left foot shot on the turn crashed high into the net.

The free-kick had been given away by Robert Enes just seconds after Enes had himself been cut down by George

failed to deal with convincingly.

It seemed only a matter of time before the pressure would tell.

But somehow South Melbourne dug themselves out of this poor start and gradually worked themselves into the contest.

Rusan had headed over in this early period, and then Luke Casserley shot wide after a Kresimir Marusic back heel set him in space.

South Melbourne's first attack of note happened in the 16th minute.

Industrial mid-fielder David Clarkson had a 20 metre shot gathered by Henderson at the second attempt with the avaricious Curcija menacingly bearing down.

Just before the half came the best unconverted chance either side would have all day.

In a nine-pass movement begun deep in their own half when Enes in-

The pass was perfect and Marusic had only Michael Petkovic to beat when he let fly his shot.

Petkovic's positioning was precise, and he managed to make himself too large for Marusic's shot which cannoned off his legs to safety.

Although the game was well-poised by the end of the half, within nine minutes of the re-start Curcija had converted the penalty that effectively ended the contest.

With a Clarkson-Paul Trimboli midfield combination, the ball was worked to Curcija at the edge of the penalty area.

As the Olyroo striker was winding up for his shot, Rusan stepped in front tripping him and

had the last opportunities of significance for Spirit but there was to be no joy for them on this visit to Melbourne.

The match was Olyroo Tansel Baser's last in Melbourne, and maybe in the Ericsson Cup as his transfer to Turkish side Trabzonspor will be completed before next week.

He leaves at the beginning of January - the latest in a line of Australian talent overseas.

The departure of Baser will cause a re-arrangement in South's defence.

Baser has recently been playing as sweeper and this week Baser was moved to left-back - a position Fausto De Amicis has usually held.

De Amicis took over as sweeper this week.

"We did that last week against Adelaide, we played Fausto as sweeper. It's been something I've had at the back of my mind to do for a while, and we were just waiting for the right game to do it. I thought

he worked well last week and decided to continue with it, and with Tansel going we've obviously got some decisions to make about who slots in there and who goes to sweeper. I haven't made up my mind, I'm happy with Fausto there at the moment," said South coach Ange Postecoglou after the game.

It is this movement of players from the national league that Spirit coach, and overseas pioneer Graham Arnold puts down to a decline in the standard of the competition.

"(The standard of the league is) less than when I left, but that's normal when you consider the player-drain, the amount

of players that have gone overseas. The young players are good, it's just that there's a lot of clubs that don't have the patience with them. I've got the patience with mine, and I think you've got to have patience with kids because they're always going to make mistakes."

SOUTH MELBOURNE (Curcija 31, 54) NORTHERN SPIRIT 0

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium
Man of the Match: Paul Trimboli SMEL

Goutzioulis.

Goutzioulis for his tackle, and then Enes for his, both found themselves booked for their indiscretions.

It had all started so brightly for Spirit.

Within ten minutes of the game starting Spirit had several corners which the South defence

Marusic later set up Clayton Zane whose shot also went wide.

The play was end-to-end, possibly as the conditions encouraged it - rain early that morning in a typical Melbourne four-seasons day had meant defences were to find their footing perilous and turning fraught.

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Enes had sensed that South's defence was square and that Poric could be clean through if the right ball was played.

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Enes had sensed that South's defence was square and that Poric could be clean through if the right ball was played.

Casserley, then Zane,

Wolves slaughtered at Shark Park

By Sam Lienert

ADELAIDE Sharks midfielder Alex Duric scored the first two goals midway through the second half to open the floodgates as the home side crushed Wollongong 5-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium on Sunday.

The big win kept the seventh-placed Sharks well in touch with the leaders but at halftime nobody could have

predicted such a one-sided result.

Both sides wasted a large number of scoring chances in the first half as Wollongong dominated the midfield.

Wollongong's pacey Fijian striker Esala Masi missed a series of easy shots.

Fellow striker Sasho Petrovski, who showed great accuracy to score three goals in last week's 6-1 drubbing of

ADELAIDE SHARKS 5 (Duric 60, 65, Alagich 70, Poimer, Gibson) WOLLONGONG CXITY 0

Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium
Man of the Match: John Gibson ADSH

Gippsland, was also unable to steer home a number of first-half chances.

Adelaide came out with much more intensity in the second half, clearly desperate to gain the three points against the lowly

Wolves.

The Sharks also wasted chances, strikers Derek Poimer and Hamilton Thorp struggling to work well together and clearly failing to communicate on a number of corner

kicks.

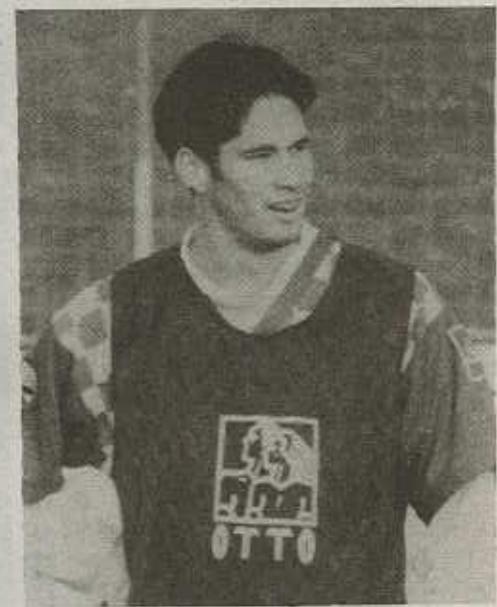
But then Duric finally broke the goal-drought, scoring in the 60th and 65th minutes to put his side 2-0 in the lead to spark a goal onslaught.

Wolves coach Nick Theodorakopolous lost patience with Masi and dragged him to the bench after Duric's second goal, replacing him with Michael Brooks.

But the move had no impact on the Sharks' momentum, midfielder Richie Alagich capping a hard-working match with his side's third goal in 10 minutes, a simple right-footer from close range after a nicely

placed Poimer cross.

Adelaide continued to press hard with its confidence up and, with the Wolves defence in tatters, Poimer and John Gibson sealed the comprehensive victory.



Man of the match John Gibson

Bresciano late goal seals Blues Christmas

By Anthony Raineri

Olyroo midfielder Marco Bresciano proved Marconi's nemesis for the second time this year as Carlton ended the Sydney club's unbeaten home national soccer league record this season with a 2-0 win on Saturday night.

Carlton led 1-0 but an equaliser appeared likely until Bresciano scored the match sealer five minutes into injury time at Marconi Stadium.

It was Bresciano who scored an injury time winner against Marconi in the NSL final

in May.

Bresciano's goal was scored after dispossessing Marconi defender Danny Invincible close to the goal line.

Off-season recruit Joe Tricarico tapped in the first goal from close range eight minutes after halftime after receiving a header from captain Andrew Marth which followed a pass by Brazilian striker Alex Moreira.

A scoreless first half belied the action as both teams showed off their attacking prowess.

Chad Gibson, Marconi's lively right back,

had the best chance 10 minutes before the break when his shot from outside the penalty area thumped against the crossbar.

Teammate Kris Trajanovski pounced on the rebound and lifted the ball to Francis Awaritefe whose diving header hit the side netting.

Gibson and Awaritefe had also combined in the 16th minute but veteran striker Awaritefe shot wide.

Carlton also gave its fans plenty to cheer about.

In the 27th minute, Moreira forced rookie

Marconi keeper David Aceski into a diving save from a volley.

Former Melbourne Knights grand final winner Lupo Lapsansky skinned the Marconi crossbar with a blistering shot shortly afterwards.

Marconi coach Frank Farina was satisfied despite the loss.

"We created a lot of chances and hit the woodwork a few times," he said.

"But if we play like that week in week out we will win a lot more games," he said.

"Carlton's goalkeeper (Adrian Cagalj) was outstanding and

MARCONI FAIRFIELD 0
CARLTON 2 (Tricarico 53, Bresciano 90)
Venue: Marconi Stadium
Man of the Match: Francis Awaritefe MARC



Just brilliant: Marconi striker Francis Awaritefe

we were caught out with their second goal right on the death.

"We've got the Melbourne Knights next week but thankfully we will have a couple of players back from injury."

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

MARCONI

DAVID ACESKI: Wasn't at fault in either goal and often was the hero with excellent saves, in particular his early second half block of Tricarico's shot. 8/10

CHAD GIBSON: Fought and jostled all the way. A real defender's game and on this display Gibson could become a regular Stallion very shortly. With just 16 minutes gone sent Awaritefe away with a brilliant ball. 8/10

MARK BABIC: Lacked the sparkle of old. Worked hard enough at the centre of defence but rarely proved dominant. 7/10

DOMINIC LONGO: Partnered Babic in the centre of the four man defence which, on this occasion, lacked a sweeper's touch – none more so than when Longo was beaten in the air by Marth for the first Carlton goal. 7/10

BUDDY FARAH: The young full back belied his inexperience to almost totally subdue Brazilian striker Moreira. Worked hard throughout. 6/10

CHRISTIAN CARE: Another Marconi player who should have scored but didn't. Worked very hard between the defence and midfield but little of his industry paid dividends. Distribution at times sloppy. 6/10

VLADO ZORIC: Rarely sighted as an attacking force. Golden opportunity went begging when he took a fresh air swipe at an Awaritefe cut-back. 5/10

DARREN McDONALD: Worked like a trojan in the midfield but too often his final distribution let him down. Also guilty of being caught in possession but worked very hard. 7/0

BRAD MALONEY: Not the skipper's best ever game at Bossley Park on a night when the midfield just didn't click. Always pushing forward to support the front runners but on this night his final touch just wasn't there. 6/10

KRIS TRAJANOVSKI: Very quiet in the first half and in

the second had a glorious opportunity when sent clear by Awaritefe. But as was the story of this game he took the wrong option. Substituted late on. 6/10

FRANCIS AWARITEFE: B-r-i-l-l-i-a-n-t. Had the rest of his side taken the gifts he was serving up on a platter then Marconi would have scored six. But all too often he was the lone soldier as his support was rarely in evidence and when it was, was too slow – or late. His close ball control and work rate were of the highest order. Must rate as one of his best ever games in a Marconi shirt. 9/10

Substitute Danny Invincible had a late chance, again set up by Awaritefe, but his hesitation cost him what should have been the equaliser. At fault when caught in possession for Bresciano's excellent goal. Joe Bruni had little time to impact.

TOTAL: 75

CARLTON

ADRIAN CAGALJ: On this performance he will keep Dean Anastasiadis out of the first team for a while. Brilliant, stopping everything that came his way with the composure of an international. Set his mark early with a great double save from Gibson and Awaritefe. 8/10

CON ANTHOPOULOS: Worked hard and saved a certain goal when he cleared a weak Maloney effort of the line. 7/10

DAVID CERVINSKI: Was better in the second half when he got forward to support his attack. In the first half he closely man-marked Awaritefe who tore him to shreds. 6/10

MARCUS STERGIOPOULOS: Had a quiet first half and shared the marking duties on Awaritefe in the second half. Looked uncomfortable in the back line. 6/10

WITH Bruce Campbell

MARCO BRESCIANO: Maybe not his best game but scored a great goal when he forced Invincible into an error before dispossessing him then cutting in on a solo run which saw him beat Aceski with a curling shot. 7/10

SEAN DOUGLAS: Played a great sweeper's role mopping up his share of Marconi attacks. Combined well with Marth who played in front of him. 7/10

ROBBIE MARKOVAC: Involved in early action when he broke down the right flank. He should have had a bigger impact on this game but was well held by the inexperienced Farah. Replaced at half time. 6/10

ANDREW MARTH: Hustled, hustled and did the hard work which set up his side's win. Played a real captain's part and was not afraid to put his body in the firing line. Won countless balls and set up the first goal with a great header. 8/10

LUBO LAPANSKY: Had a quiet game by his own high standards but worked hard enough in the midfield power-house which really won the game for Carlton. 6/10

JOE TRICARICO: After early bursts of speed he lost his way a bit and faded but was perfectly positioned to get on the end of his skipper's header and score the first goal. Replaced in the second half. 6/10

ALEX MORIERA: Had an overhead in the first half but that was about it. Largely anonymous although in fairness he suffered a bit from lack of direct service on his flank. 6/10

Substitutes David della Rocca, and Alex Josifovski did little to get excited about although the lively Andy Vlahos certainly added a lot to the right flank when he replaced Markovac at half time.

TOTAL: 73

SCOREBOARD

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AUSTRALIA

ERICSSON CUP

ROUND 9

Monday 7 December
Canberra Cosmos 0 Adelaide City 1
Venue: Bruce Stadium
Referee: D Dwight
Attendance: 1,770
Cosmos: Knezevic, T Popovich, Wilson, I Zelic, Marcina, Magnacca, Buljan, Langone (Clarke 83), Miglietti, Prenzski, Musitano (Burt 88)
Yellow Cards: Zelic, Miglietti
Adelaide: Petkovic, Ivanovic, Tobin, Talladira, Mori, Veart (Yates 79), Mennillo, Costanzo, Hassell, Terminello, Kim (Armour 68)
Scorer: Veart 78
Yellow Cards: Talladira, Mennillo, Kim

ROUND 10

Monday 14 December
Canberra Cosmos 0 Northern Spirit 1
Venue: Bruce Stadium
Referee: G Laverton
Attendance: 1,704
Cosmos: Knezevic, T Popovich, Wilson, I Zelic, Marcina, Magnacca, Buljan (Musitano 26), Langone, Miglietti, Prenzski (Burt 64), Kelly (Roberts 20)
Spirit: Henderson, Rudan, Marusic, Arnold, Moss, Watkins (Snyder 82), Bilokapic, Zane, Cunico, Langdon (Wearne 85)
Scorer: Bilokapic 52 pen
Yellow Cards: Moss, Bilokapic, Zane

ROUND 11

Friday 18 December
Newcastle Breakers 2 Melbourne Knights 2
Venue: Austral Park
Referee: M Breeze
Attendance: 3,312

ERICSSON CUP 1998/99

	home	away					Pts
		P	W	D	L	F	A
1 Perth Glory	11	4	1	0	11	5	23
2 South Melbourne	11	5	1	0	16	7	21
3 Marconi Fairfield	10	4	0	1	13	6	20
4 Carlton	11	5	0	1	17	3	20
5 Adelaide Sharks	10	3	2	0	14	4	17
6 Adelaide City	10	3	2	1	10	5	17
7 Sydney United	10	4	1	1	10	4	17
8 Sydney Olympic	10	4	1	0	10	3	16
9 Northern Spirit	10	2	1	1	4	4	13
10 Wollongong City	10	2	2	0	12	5	11
11 Gippsland Falcons	10	2	1	2	2	4	11
12 Brisbane Strikers	9	2	3	1	9	8	10
13 Melbourne Knights	10	1	0	4	4	7	10
14 Newcastle Breakers	10	2	1	2	9	9	11
15 Canberra Cosmos	10	0	0	6	3	14	10

Newcastle:

Scorers: Pryce pen 43, pen 81
Yellow Cards: Pryce, Yoon, Sprod

Knights:

Scorers: Kelic 7, H Karl 32
Yellow Cards: Jolic, Nastevski, Joe Didulica, Kovacevic, Vukadin, Kutlesovski

Red Card: Nastevski

Saturday 19 December

Marconi Fairfield 0 Carlton 2
Venue: Marconi Stadium
Referee: G Connolly
Attendance: 4,235
Marconi:
Yellow Card: McDonald
Carlton:
Scorers: Tricarico 57, Bresciano 89
Yellow Card: Tricarico

Sunday 20 December

Gippsland Falcons 1 Adelaide City 0

Venue: Falcons Park

Referee: L Prospero

Attendance: 1,582

Falcons:

Scorer: MacNicol 56
Yellow Cards: Perinovic, Bell, Di Iorio, Canosa, Jevjedevic, Thompson

Adelaide:

Yellow Card: Mennillo

South Melbourne 2 Northern Spirit 0

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium

Referee: E Lennie

Attendance: 6,206

South:

Scorers: Curcija 31, pen 54

Yellow Card: Goutzioulis

Spirit:

Yellow Cards: Enes, Zane, Rudan

Adelaide Sharks 5 Wollongong Wolves 0

Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium

Referee: J Blaney

Attendance: 2,823

Sharks:

Scorers: Duric 61, 66, Alagich 72, Poimer 88, Gibson 89

Yellow Card: Thorp

Wolves:

Yellow Cards: Sinozic, Petrovski, Souris

Red Card: Souris

Sydney Olympic 3 Perth Glory 1

Venue: Belmore Sportsground

Referee: M Shield

Attendance: 6,898

Olympic:

Scorers: Cardozo pen 77, Juric 89, Augerinos 87

Yellow Cards: Durakovic, Brennan, Culina

Perth:

Scorer: Markovski 33

Yellow Cards: G Naven, Despotovski, Kalo-geracos

Red Cards: Despotovski, G Naven

DUE TO A TECHNICAL FAULT
ROUND 11 LINE-UPS WILL BE
PRINTED NEXT ISSUE

ENGLAND

FA CUP REPLAYS

Tuesday 15 December

Brentford 2 Oldham 2
Bristol Rovers 5 Exeter 0
Man City 1 Darlington 0
Plymouth 3 Wycombe 2
Rotherham 4 Rochdale 0
Rushden & D'monds 4 Doncaster 2
Wigan 0 Notts County 0
Notts County won 4-2 on penalties

Carling Premiership

Tuesday 15 December

Man Utd 1

Saturday 19 December

Chelsea 2

Coventry City 1

Liverpool 2

Manchester United 2

Newcastle United 1

Nottingham Forest 2

Southampton 3

West Ham United 2

Sunday 20 December

Arsenal 3

Playing on Monday:

Charlton Athletic v Aston Villa

Division 1

Saturday 19 December

Barnsley 1 Swindon 3

Birmingham 0 Sunderland 0

Bolton 3 Portsmouth 1

Bradford 2 Wolverhampton 1

Crewe 1 Huddersfield 2

Crystal Palace 1 Queens Park Rangers 1

Grimsby 2 Watford 1

Norwich 2 Bristol City 1

Port Vale 1 Bury 0

Stockport 2 Oxford 0

West Bromwich 0 Tranmere 2

Division 2

Friday 18 December

Bristol Rovers 0 Macclesfield 0

Colchester 2 Blackpool 2

Saturday 19 December

Burnley 0 Northampton 2

Chesterfield 1 Wigan 1

Gillingham 4 Notts County 0

Luton 1 Millwall 2

Preston 0 Fulham 1

Reading 1 Oldham 1

Walsall 1 Stoke 0

Wrexham 0 Bournemouth 1

Wycombe 4 Lincoln City 1

York 2 Manchester City 1

Division 3

Friday 18 December

Brentford 1 Cambridge 0

Rotherham 2 Chester 4

Shrewsbury 1 Torquay 2

Saturday 19 December

Barnet 3 Leyton Orient 2

Cardiff 4 Mansfield 2

Darlington 3 Scunthorpe 1

Halifax 1 Exeter 1

Hartlepools 2 Southend 4

Hull 0 Swans 2

Peterborough 3 Scarborough 1

Plymouth 2 Carlisle 0

Rochdale 2 Brighton 1

TABLES (all as at Saturday 19 December)

Premier league

Chelsea 18 8 9 1 29 17 33

Aston Villa 17 9 6 3 27 17 33

Manchester United 18 8 7 2 36 23 31

Middlesbrough 18 7 9 2 30 21 30

Leeds United 17 7 8 2 28 14 29

West Ham United 18 8 5 5 22 22 29

Arsenal 17 6 8 3 17 10 26

Wimbledon 18 7 5 6 23 29 26

Liverpool 18 7 4 7 29 22 25

Newcastle United 18 6 6 6 22 21 24

Leicester City 18 6 6 6 21 20 24

Derby County 18 5 9 4 18 17 24

Tottenham Hotspur 18 6

SCOREBOARD

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RAM SPORTS

Bordeaux	20	14	2	4	43	17	44
Lyon	20	8	4	6	26	19	32
Rennes	20	9	5	6	25	24	32
Nantes	20	8	7	5	27	22	31
Bastia	20	9	2	9	26	24	29
Monaco	19	8	4	7	27	19	28
Lens	20	8	4	8	28	25	28
Montpellier	20	8	3	9	37	34	27
Auxerre	20	7	6	7	24	25	27
PSG	20	6	7	7	18	17	25
Strasbourg	20	5	9	6	17	21	24
Metz	20	5	7	8	18	28	22
AS Nancy	20	5	6	9	18	26	21
Lorient	20	4	7	9	17	27	19
Le Havre	20	4	6	10	14	26	18
Sochaux	19	3	7	9	16	34	16
Toulouse	20	2	9	9	14	31	15

GERMANY

German first division	
Friday 18 December	
SC Freiburg 1	
Borussia Dortmund 3	
Saturday 19 December	
Bayern Munich 3	
Hansa Rostock 1	
Hamburg SV 2	
Schalke 04 1	
Kaiserslautern 1	
Eintracht Frankfurt 0	
Bayern Munich	18
Bayer Leverkusen	18
Kaiserslautern	18
TSV 1860 Munich	18
Borussia Dortmund	18
Hertha Berlin	17
VfL Wolfsburg	18
Hamburg SV	18
SC Freiburg	18
VfB Stuttgart	18
Schalke 04	18
Werder Bremen	17
MSV Duisburg	18
VfL Bochum	18
Eintracht Frankfurt	18
Hansa Rostock	18
Nuremberg	18
Bor. Moenchengladbach	18

P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
18	14	2	2	43	13	44
18	10	6	2	40	18	36
18	10	4	4	29	28	34
18	9	5	4	32	24	32
18	8	5	5	28	18	29
17	9	2	6	25	17	29
18	7	6	5	34	28	27
18	6	6	6	23	23	24
18	5	7	6	21	23	22
18	5	6	7	23	25	21
18	5	6	7	20	29	21
17	5	5	7	25	24	20
18	4	7	7	20	29	19

ISRAEL

Israeli National League						
Saturday 19 December						
Hapoel Tel Aviv 1						
Zafirim Holon 3						
Maccabi Herzliya 0						
Hapoel Petah Tikva 1						
Hapoel Haifa 6						
Betar Jerusalem 1						
Maccabi Jaffa 1						
Hapoel Haifa	13					
Maccabi Haifa	13					
Betar Jerusalem	13					
Hapoel Petah Tikva	13					
Maccabi Tel Aviv	13					
Hapoel Tel Aviv	13					
Maccabi Petah Tikva	13					
Zafirim Holon	13					
Ironi Ashdod	13					
Hapoel Jerusalem	13					
Hapoel Kfar Sava	13					
Ironi Rishon Lezion	13					
Bnei Yehuda	13					
Maccabi Herzliya	13					
Hapoel Beit She'an	13					
Maccabi Jaffa	13					
P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
13	11	2	0	26	3	35
13	9	2	2	31	10	29
13	8	1	4	36	16	25
13	8	1	4	28	17	25
13	6	3	4	24	18	21
13	6	3	4	21	16	21
13	5	3	2	22	15	20
13	5	3	5	18	11	18
13	4	5	4	20	20	17
13	5	2	6	21	25	17
13	5	2	6	18	28	17
13	4	4	5	23	29	16
13	3	3	7	17	26	12
13	3	1	9	13	23	10
13	1	2	10	7	40	5
13	1	1	11	8	36	4

NORTHERN IRELAND

Premier Division	
Friday 18 December	
Portadown 1	
Saturday 19 December	
Ballymena United 0	
Cliftonville 0	
Crusaders 2	
Linfield 1	
Glenavon 1	
Coleraine 0	
Omagh Town 0	

Glentoran 5	Newry 1
	P W D L F A Pts
Glentoran	20 13 3 4 43 24 42
Linfield	20 11 7 2 33 16 40
Crusaders	20 11 4 5 29 17 37
Newry	20 9 6 5 32 29 33
Ballymena	20 8 5 7 20 18 29
Glenavon	20 7 5 8 23 20 26
Cliftonville	20 4 8 8 20 28 20
Coleraine	20 4 6 10 19 33 18
Portadown	20 4 5 11 19 26 17

PORTUGAL

Omagh Town	20 3 3 14 13 40 12
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First Division	
Friday 18 December	
Boavista 3	
Saturday 19 December	
Campomaiorense 1	
Porto 3 S	
Porto	16 12 2 2 37 15 38
Boavista	16 10 5 1 27 11 35
Sporting Lisbon	16 9 5 2 31 14 32
Benfica	15 9 3 3 32 11 30
Estrela Amadora	15 8 4 3 19 15 28
Uniao Leiria	15 7 3 5 15 11 24
Salgueiros	15 5 7 3 19 19 22
Rio Ave	15 5 4 6 12 18 19
Vitoria Setubal	15 5 3 7 14 22 18
Vitoria Guimaraes	16 4 5 7 20 17 17
Braga	15 4 5 6 21 29 17
Farense	16 5 2 9 13 23 17
Campomaiorense	16 4 3 9 16 27 15
Beira Mar	15 2 8 5 10 16 14
Alverca	15 2 8 5 11 18 14
Chaves	15 3 3 9 15 29 12
Maritimo	15 2 6 7 13 18 12
Academica	15 2 4 9 16 28 10

SCOTLAND

Premier Division	
Saturday 19 December	
Celtic 5	
Dundee 1	
Hearts 2	
Motherwell 1	
Dunfermline Athletic 0	
Aberdeen 2	
Rangers 3	
St Johnstone 2	

Division one	

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